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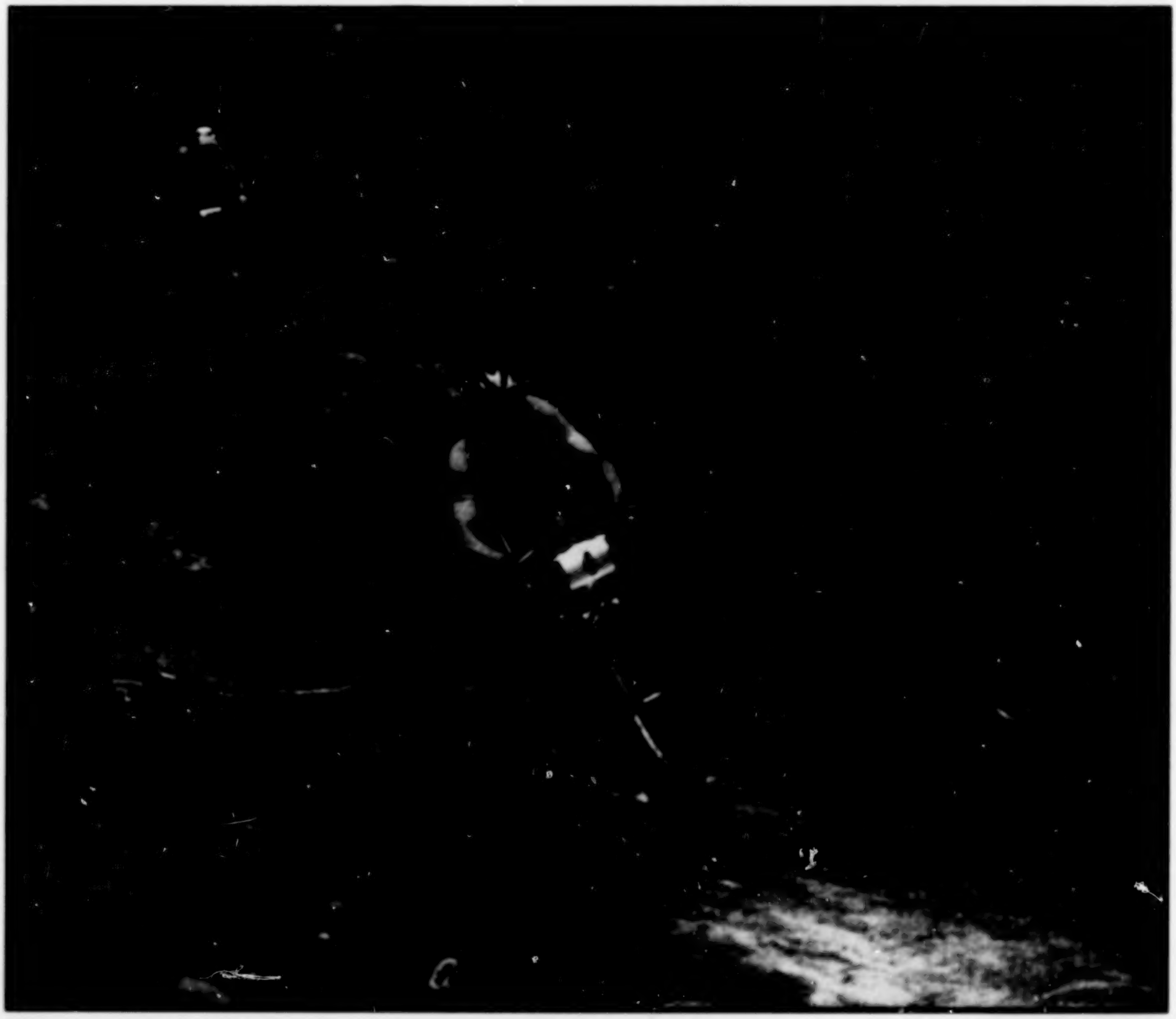
United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Dakotas District Office
South Dakota Resource Area

September 1996

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE FORT MEADE RECREATION AREA ACEC



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DECISION RECORD

DECISION:

Based on the analysis contained in the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Fort Meade Recreation Area Management Plan and the related Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), it is my decision to amend the South Dakota Resource Management Plan (RMP) as described in Alternative A (Proposed Action) of the EA. This decision designates the Fort Meade Recreation Area as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and authorizes implementation of the revised management plan for the Fort Meade Recreation Area. This decision will amend the decisions made in prior plans (Management Framework Plan 1973, (MFP) and the Fort Meade Recreation Management Plan of 1981) which were incorporated in the South Dakota Resource Management Plan RMP of 1985.

RATIONALE FOR THE DECISION:

The MFP of 1973 and the current Recreation Management Plan (1981) for the Fort Meade Recreation Area were both incorporated as part of the South Dakota Resource Management Plan of 1985. Both have become outdated and lack specific guidance to handle the increased demands being placed on the area now and expected in the future. During the revision of the Recreation Management Plan, the area was nominated for consideration as an ACEC. Section 202 (c)(3) of FLPMA mandates the agency to give priority to the designation and protection of ACEC's in the development and revision of land use plans.

The area contains historic and cultural resources that are regionally significant, irreplaceable, unique, and vulnerable to vandalism and adverse change. As such it meets the importance and relevance criteria as defined in 43CFR 1610.7-2. Special management attention is needed to preserve and protect these resources and the integrity of the surrounding area.

Alternative A (Proposed Action) allocates land uses, prescribes management objectives and direction for the Fort Meade Recreation Area ACEC which will result in proper levels of use and protection of the resource values that are present. It also resolves the issues that were raised during the planning process.

PROTESTS:

A notice of approval of this decision will be published and sent to parties of interest. The notice shall provide for a protest period of 30 days on the approval of the decision and will outline instructions on how and where to file a protest.

Authorized Official: ______________________ Date: 9-26-96
acting State Director

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

SOUTH DAKOTA
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT
FOR THE
FORT MEADE RECREATION AREA ACEC

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

I have reviewed the attached environmental assessment (EA) which analyzes and discloses the effects of the proposed action. It is my conclusion that implementation of the proposed action will not have any significant impacts on the human environment. Therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to Section 102(2) (C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 is not required.

Recommended By:

Authorized Official: ______ Date: 8/28/96

Area Manager

Approved By:

Authorized Official: ______ Date: 9/11/96

District Manager

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION 1

- Purpose and Need 1
- Name, Location and Setting 1
- Background on Prior Planning 1
- Planning Process 2
- Planning Criteria 2
- Issue Identification 2
- Planning Issues 3
- ACEC Evaluation Process 3
- ACEC Evaluation Findings 3
- Conformance Statement 4

CHAPTER II - ALTERNATIVES 7

- Alternatives Considered but eliminated from detailed analysis 7
- Alternative A - ACEC Designation with revised management plan 7
- Alternative B - No Action (Continue management under current plan) 7

CHAPTER III - AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT 11

CHAPTER IV - ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES 17

CHAPTER V - MITIGATION AND MONITORING 21

CHAPTER VI - CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION 23

APPENDICES

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND NEED

The South Dakota Resource Area of the Bureau of Land Management(BLM) has prepared this plan amendment to address the appropriateness of designating the Fort Meade Recreation Area as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern(ACEC). This designation (accompanied by special management actions) has been evaluated as a means of protecting significant resources in the area.

Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA) states, "in the development of land use plans, the Secretary shall give priority to the designation and protection of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern". The BLM regulations define an ACEC as an area "within the public lands where special management attention is required (when such areas are developed or used or where no development is required) to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources, or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards".

Current land use management activities for the South Dakota Resource Area are guided by the South Dakota Resource Management Plan of 1985. Management guidance for the Fort Meade Recreation Area (FMRA) is contained in the Fort Meade Recreation Management Plan completed in 1981. This plan was incorporated by the RMP and did not evaluate the area as a potential ACEC.

ACEC designation recognizes the area possesses significant values and establishes special management measures to protect those values. Designation helps assure that the significant values or resources are adequately addressed in future management actions and land use proposals within the area.

The existing Recreation Management Plan is general in nature and lacks specific resource objectives and planning guidance. A variety of requests for use of the area by other agencies, groups, individuals, and also BLM initiated projects, indicated the need for more specific management guidance. Based on the needs and desires of current and future uses, the revised plan will integrate and update previous planning efforts and provide management direction and objectives for the various resources in the area.

This plan amendment serves two purposes. (1) It designates the FMRA as an ACEC and (2) it establishes management direction that prescribes management objectives, land use allocations, and actions designed to provide the FMRA a level of resource protection, development and public use consistent with the management philosophy for the area.

NAME, LOCATION AND SETTING

The Fort Meade Recreation Area(FMRA) consists of 6,693 acres and is unique and notable for its place in western history. This high use area is a mix of forest and midgrass prairie located on the eastern foothills of the Black Hills, adjacent to Sturgis, South Dakota, in Meade County. See Map 1 in Appendix A. The area's proximity to population centers makes it highly visible and used for a wide variety of activities.

The area originated in December 1878, when approximately 7000 acres were declared a Military Reservation and named after Major General George G. Meade. Fort Meade remained a Military installation until 1944 when jurisdiction was transferred to the Veterans Administration.

In 1954 and 1955, 3,500 acres were transferred to the United States Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM). In 1960, PLO 2112 transferred jurisdiction of an additional 3,200 acres to the BLM. In addition, this Land Order withdrew the acres from appropriation, including the mining laws, and dedicated the land for the "conservation of natural resources, including wildlife and recreation resources and the protection of wildlife habitat".

BACKGROUND ON PRIOR PLANNING

In 1973, the Fort Meade Management Framework Plan (MFP) was completed. This action essentially established the Fort Meade Recreation Area and recommended that a Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP) be completed. The Fort Meade Recreation Management Plan was prepared and approved in 1981.

In 1985, decisions from the Management Framework Plan and the Fort Meade Recreation Plan were incorporated and became a part of the comprehensive South Dakota Resource Management Plan.

In 1992, the Oil and Gas RMP/EIS Amendment was approved and this amendment contains a no lease decision for the FMRA.

PLANNING PROCESS

The plan amendment process is defined in Federal regulations (43CFR Part 1610) and provides for amending existing management plans due to:

1. The need to consider monitoring or evaluation findings.
2. The availability of new data.
3. New or revised policy.
4. A change in circumstances or a proposed action that may result in the scope of resource uses or a change in terms, conditions, and decisions of the original approval plan.

In the case of this plan amendment criteria 4 was triggered due to revision of the Fort Meade Recreation Management Plan.

PLANNING CRITERIA

The following criteria must be considered in the development of the plan amendment:

1. Those issues and procedural steps required by law, regulation, and policy such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Federal Land Management Policy Act(FLPMA), 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508, 43 CFR Parts 1600-1610.8, BLM Manual 1601-1625, and BLM National Environmental Policy Act Handbook H-1790-1.

2. Opportunities must be provided for public participation and their input considered.

3. The plan amendment must be widely coordinated and examined for consistency with officially approved/adopted resource plans.

4. Analysis of the Management Situation (BLM Manual 1616.4 and 43 CFR part 1610.4-4) should be prepared which describes what resources exist within the planning area and how they are currently being managed.

5. A wide number of resources must be addressed in all plan amendments. Resources which apply to this plan amendment are: air quality, soils, water, vegetation, visual, recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, rangeland and livestock grazing, cultural resources, lands, fire management, and minerals.

6. The following steps must be completed in any plan amendment process when potential ACECS are involved:
   - a) Identify the potential ACEC(s)
   - b) Obtain information on relevance and importance values.
   - c) Evaluate each resource or hazard to determine if it meets the relevance and importance criteria.
   - d) Drop areas from further consideration that do not meet criteria.
   - e) Provide temporary management of the potential ACEC if necessary.
   - f) Develop management prescriptions for potential ACEC(s).
   - g) Analyze the effects of the management prescriptions.
   - h) Select the preferred management alternative.
   - i) Designate the ACEC(s).

ISSUE IDENTIFICATION (PUBLIC SCOPING)

The Council on Environmental Quality Regulations Implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR Part 1501.7) and the BLM planning regulations (43 CFR 1610.4-1) require an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action. Scoping helps determine issues or concerns to be analyzed in the EA. During this process, the scope and importance of issues related to the proposed action and alternatives were identified. Information obtained during the scoping process was used to determine which impact topics would be addressed in this EA.

The scoping process involved discussions with the public, and resource specialists of BLM and other relevant agencies. Written and verbal comments were received and compiled as a result of news releases, mailings, and public meetings. The following section outlines the steps taken by BLM for the scoping and public involvement process.

The South Dakota Resource Area sent out one hundred and seven letters to government agencies, homeowners groups, adjacent landowners, user groups, and other interested parties. This letter identified the preliminary management concerns and questions the SDRA staff thought needed to be addressed in greater detail in the revised plan. The public was notified and participation was encouraged through the news media.

Following analysis of the 29 comments received from respondents, questions were formulated to restate problems and concerns in such a way as to focus planning on specific areas of concern. These questions can be found in Part I of the FMRA ACEC Management Plan.

Following nomination as a potential ACEC, one hundred nineteen letters were sent to individuals, government agencies, and user groups. An open house was held in Sturgis to discuss the proposal and management prescriptions. Fifty-six people attended. Twenty-nine of the thirty-five written comments received were in favor of the proposal, six were undecided and one was opposed.

PLANNING ISSUES

The recognition and resolution of important issues is the key to successful planning and management. This section identifies major issues or management concerns that were identified during the public participation process. Specific management actions taken to resolve these issues can be found in Part I Management Direction of the ACEC plan.

1. ACEC boundary/designation

Should the area be designated an ACEC and where should the boundaries for such a designation be.

2. Maintenance Responsibility for the Philtown Entrance Road.

During the scoping process, residents of the Grand Pre subdivision questioned the maintenance responsibility on the Philtown road (see Map 2 in Appendix A). This road was at one time a state highway and was subsequently abandoned when Interstate 90 was constructed. After abandonment neither the county nor the state accepted maintenance responsibility on the asphalt covered road.

Due to a lack of maintenance, large potholes had formed and the road became a safety hazard. The subdivision residents felt that BLM should share responsibility for the maintenance since a large portion of the traffic on the road is generated by recreation area visitors entering and leaving the unit.

3. Compatibility of Land Uses.

The public land in the FMRA is managed for a variety of uses and contains multiple values. Potential conflicts between different recreational uses and conflicts between recreational uses and other land uses can be minimized through proper planning. Management guidelines are needed to insure the compatibility of recreational uses, wildlife needs, and other nonrecreational land uses. Land use allocations and specific actions to mitigate potential conflicts can be found in Part I Management Direction.

4. Status of Backcountry Byway Designation

The BLM access road to the FMRA is located about one half mile east of Sturgis. It is about five miles in length and runs through the south half of the FMRA. Access from the south end is via Exit 34 from Interstate 90. The north entrance intersects with Highway 34 near the Ft. Meade Veterans Administration Medical Center. See Map 2 in Appendix A. It is a two lane gravel surfaced road which can be safely driven with a normal touring car. The grades do not exceed five percent and it is maintained on a regular basis in the summer. It is frequently used by employees of the Ft. Meade Medical Center living in Blucksburg subdivision and the Piedmont area to get to work. It was designated a Backcountry Byway in 1989.

The Fort Meade Backcountry Byway provides an opportunity for the public to take a short drive through a scenic and historic area that is managed for the multiple uses of recreation, wildlife, cultural and historic resources, grazing, and forestry. Associated or nearby attractions include the Black Hills National Cemetery, historic buildings remaining from the original Ft. Meade Cavalry Post, Ft. Meade Museum, and the old Ft. Meade Post Cemetery.

Since its designation as a Backcountry Byway, promotion has been limited. Signs have been placed at each entrance point, it has been included in several books and magazines featuring Backcountry byways and an informational brochure has been published. A formal dedication ceremony has not been held and entrance points on Interstate 90 and Highway 34 have not been signed.

There is a concern among BLM staff members that tourism promotion efforts by the public and private sector will result in a higher level and different type of traffic (recreational vehicles and buses) through the area. The increased traffic on the narrow winding road presents a greater hazard to motorists, mountain bikers and joggers. Other hazards include livestock at large which sometimes wander onto the unfenced road, icy road conditions during the winter months, excessive speed, blind curves, and obscured vision due to vegetation in certain locations. Mitigating actions are contained in Part II Management Direction under Recreation/Visitor Management.

ACEC EVALUATION PROCESS

To be considered as a potential ACEC, and further evaluated in resource management plan alternatives, inventory data must be analyzed to determine whether there are areas containing significant resources, values, systems or processes or hazards. To be a potential ACEC, an area must meet both relevance and importance criteria for at least one resource value (43CFR 1610.7-2).

Relevance Criteria

An area meets the relevance criteria if it contains one or more of the following:

1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archaeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).

2. A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species, or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).

3. A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive or threatened plant species, rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities which are terrestrial, aquatic or riparian; or rare geologic features).

4. Natural hazards (including but not limited to areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs). A hazard caused by human action may meet the relevance criteria if it is determined through the resource management planning process that it has become a part of a natural process.

Importance Criteria

The value, resource, system, process, or hazard described under the relevance criteria must have substantial significance and value to satisfy the importance criteria. This generally means that the value, resource, system, process, or hazard is characterized by one or more of the following:

1. Has more than locally significant qualities which give it a special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.

2. Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.

3. Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of the Federal Land Policy and Management concerns about safety and public welfare.

4. Has qualities that warrant highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare.

5. Poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property.

ACEC EVALUATION FINDINGS

During the process of revising the Fort Meade Recreation Management Plan, the area was internally nominated for the ACEC designation due to the unique historic/cultural values that are present on the area.

An open house was held in Sturgis to discuss the ACEC designation, potential boundaries, and management prescriptions. One-hundred-nineteen notification letters were sent, and press releases issued to local newspapers and radio stations. Fifty-six people attended and as mentioned before 81% of the written comments received were supportive of the proposal.

After consideration and evaluation of the potential values and public input, the BLM staff found that relevance and importance criteria were met and documented this fact in a summary report which is on file in the SDRA office.

Decisions to be Made

Through the combined planning and NEPA process, the BLM proposes to make the following three key decisions:

1. Should the area be designated as an ACEC?

2. If designation is appropriate, how much area should be included in the designation?

3. If designated, what special management should be proposed and implemented to protect the relevant and important values?

CONFORMANCE STATEMENT

A number of land use or resource management plans have been developed by the BLM and other Federal agencies which relate to how management is carried out within the planning area. The BLM is responsible for determining if the proposed plan amendment is in conformance with these plans. The following federal, state, and county plans have been identified as applicable to the planning area, and unless otherwise noted, are believed to be in conformance with the proposed plan amendment:

FEDERAL

South Dakota RMP

Cultural Resource Management Plan for the Fort Meade Recreation Area (BLM, 1987)

Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program Final Environmental Impact Statement (BLM, 1985)

Supplement to the Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program Final Environmental Impact Statement (BLM, 1987)

Range Reform '94 Final Environmental Impact Statement (BLM and Forest Service, 1994)and Record of Decision

STATE

South Dakota Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (1987)

COUNTY

Meade County land use plan.

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CHAPTER II
ALTERNATIVES

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED FROM DETAILED ANALYSIS

Comments were received from the South Dakota Department of Transportation requesting exclusion from ACEC designation of the location they would like to use as a borrow source for an interchange reconstruction. The Fort Meade Veterans Affairs Medical Center also requested possible exclusion of the area where Fort Meade's water treatment plant, water lines and electrical lines are located.

The purpose of alternatives is to resolve issues. In the first instance, this type of land use is not consistent with the management philosophy and intensive visitor use within the special recreation management area. Since other sources are available for fill material, this request was not entertained. Whether designated an ACEC or not, the decision to deny authorization on the FMRA for such a use would be the same.

In the second instance, the issue was resolved by widening the designated corridor allowing for these types of uses to encompass the Fort Meade water treatment plant and associated rights-of-way.

ALTERNATIVE A - PROPOSED ACTION

Under this alternative, the entire 6,700 acres of the Fort Meade Recreation Area would be designated an ACEC (see map 1 in appendix A) and the management prescriptions in the attached Fort Meade Recreation Area ACEC plan approved. Approval of the ACEC plan would implement the management objectives, land use allocations, and management actions intended to protect the historic/cultural resources and the associated landscape. The ACEC designation and special management prescriptions would amend the decisions in the South Dakota Resource Management Plan (RMP) dealing with the Fort Meade Recreation Area.

ALTERNATIVE B - NO ACTION

Under the no action alternative, the area would continue to be managed according to the existing South Dakota Resource Management Plan, which incorporated by reference the Fort Meade portion of the Management Framework Plan (1973) and the Fort Meade Recreation Area Management Plan (1981). The area would not be designated an ACEC. A summary of the current management decisions and direction is discussed in the following paragraphs.

A. Wildlife/Fisheries Habitat

Current Management

Wildlife habitat is managed in cooperation with the South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks Department. The Fort Meade Recreation Management Plan called for the preparation of a Habitat Management Plan. It also recommended increasing browse, enlarging fringe areas, improving oak reproduction, developing a hardwood and riparian management program, and developing additional water sources to enhance wildlife habitat. In addition, regulations and restrictions are used to protect wildlife habitat.

Livestock grazing is managed under an allotment management plan which prescribes a pasture rest rotation system that is beneficial to wildlife habitat.

Bear Butte Creek and Fort Meade reservoir are stocked several times annually by the South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks Department.

B. Recreation/Visitor Management

Current Management

The FMRA is being managed according to the roaded natural class of the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum as defined in appendix C (page 32).

The physical setting of the FMRA is characterized by a natural environment within which resource modification and utilization practices are evident, but generally harmonize with the natural environment.

Most of the recreation activities in the FMRA are casual and nonmotorized with very little interaction with BLM. Pleasure driving on the Backcountry Byway offers the only motorized experience available since motorized use is restricted to the graveled road which provides access through the area.

Developed facilities are designed for accommodation and enhancement of nonmotorized opportunities. Recreation use in the FMRA is managed by maintaining a naturally appearing physical setting in conjunction with other resource programs; informing the public of available opportunities through law enforcement patrols, signs, maps, and brochures; reducing conflicts between various users and the environment; providing specific services when possible to enhance an opportunity or meet public demand.

Under existing regulations, hunting on the south unit (south of highway 34) is restricted to archery hunting only. The north unit is open to the use of firearms except for a portion north of highway 34 to the top of the signed ridge.

Although the Fort Meade road has been designated a Back Country Byway, efforts to promote the program have been limited. Signs have been placed along the road, it has been included in several books and magazines featuring Backcountry byways, and an informational brochure has been published.

Other decisions contained in the Fort Meade Recreation Management Plan include the following:

The Philtown road will be maintained as a major access road.

Vehicle use is restricted to designated roads and trails.

Possession and use of fireworks is prohibited.

Camping is restricted to designated campgrounds.

Fires are allowed only in campgrounds or designated fire pits.

Maintain and improve the aesthetics of the unit with good multiple resource management, especially enhancing watershed values and wildlife habitat.

C. Cultural/Historic Resources

Current Management

A portion of the area surrounding the present day Veterans Affairs Medical Center is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A total of 2,180 acres of the historic district is administered by the BLM. Cultural and historic resource management is currently guided by a Cultural Resource Activity Plan prepared in 1987. Many of the prehistoric and historic sites located within the FMRA have not been fully recorded or evaluated for National Register eligibility. Interpretation of the historic sites is comprised of identification signs which have been posted at the cavalry jumps and Curley Grimes' grave. A brochure is also available at both trailheads which contains information about the historic sites.

D. Land Use and Other Authorized Activities

Current Management

Right-of-Way, lease and permit applications are approved on a case by case basis with the current plan lacking guidance on these types of actions. Recently requests have been received for a variety of projects. Examples include a county road, a water treatment plant, a bike path, a university, a shooting range, a communication site, a rodeo arena, and the possible removal of 300,000 cubic yards of fill material for an interstate exit ramp.

The Management Framework Plan contains a decision that existing utility lines be buried for improvement of aesthetics in the area.

E. Forestry

Current Management

The timber management recommendation in the MFP calls for intensive management of areas with a site index of 50 (a measure of the sites production capability), to enhance timber production of acceptable size, quantity, and quality in a reasonable length of time.

A forest management plan has not been completed for the area. Forest management has been limited to insect control (mountain pine beetle) through commercial thinning and salvage logging of infested trees which was initiated in 1976. Since that time, 376 thousand board feet of commercial sawtimber have been removed through several small timber sales.

Mixed stands of hardwoods have provided a limited amount of fuelwood over the years. Cutting of dead and down trees has been allowed by permit only, with about ten permits being issued annually. No permits have been issued the last two years pending the outcome of this plan. The present plan contains no guidelines or restrictions on fuelwood cutting.

A study entitled "Ecology of Bur Oak Woodlands in the Foothills of the Black Hills, South Dakota by Carolyn Hull Sieg was completed in 1991. The purpose of this study was to provide baseline information on soils, plant composition, plant-soil interactions, plant successional processes, and the role of fire in maintaining riparian stands dominated by bur oak.

F. Fire Management

Current Management

Fire management policy provides for full suppression of all wildfires. This is accomplished through contracts with the Ft. Meade Fire Department, the Sturgis Volunteer Fire Department, and the State of South Dakota Division of Forestry.

Campfires are allowed only in established fire pits or grates at designated sites. Additional use restrictions are implemented under extreme fire conditions.

Prescribed fire is allowed but has not been used as a regular management tool in the past except for the burning of slash piles. A 280 acre prescribed burn has been planned for three years but has not been accomplished due to the lack of the required fuel and moisture conditions at the proper time or a shortage of funding.

G. Livestock Grazing

Current Management

In the early 60's, the Veterans Administration transferred total administrative and management responsibility of FMRA to the Bureau of Land Management. Bidding for livestock forage has been in effect at FMRA since that time.

Livestock Vegetation Contracts for two grazing tracts are issued every three years at the FMRA. The contracts are unique to the BLM's standard grazing adjudication practices. Grazing use is awarded to individuals with the highest bid.

The FMRA has been divided into two grazing allotments; Bear Butte and Fort Meade. See Map 3 in Appendix A. An Allotment Management Plan was developed for both allotments in 1979. The AMP management concepts are still in use. The following is a breakdown by allotment:

Bear Butte AMP

The allotment lies north of Highway 34, and one mile east of Sturgis. The area is fenced into four separate pastures, and is used in a four pasture rest-rotation. The area is watered by pipeline, stockwater dams, and springs. The maximum allowable stocking rate is 1261 Animal Unit Months or 227 cows with calves (or 303 yearlings) for 5 1/2 months. The designated season of use is May 15 to October 30, each year.

Fort Meade AMP

The allotment lies south of Highway 34 and the Fort Meade VA Hospital, and one mile south of Sturgis. The area is fenced into four separate pastures and used in a four pasture rest-rotation. The area is watered by springs, dams, pipelines, and creeks. The maximum allowable stocking rate is 699 Animal Unit Months or 138 cows with calves (or 184 yearlings) for 5 months. The designated season of use is May 15 to October 15 of each year.

In addition to the two AMPs, South Dakota State University, under a Recreation and Public Purposes lease uses 600 acres for cattle research. The SDSU research involves progeny testing and weight-gain studies. The R&PP lease is adjacent to the Fort Meade AMP to the east.

H. Visual Resources

Current Management

BLM manages scenic quality in the FMRA by attempting to limit the degree of change in the "characteristic landscape" to standards which are based on scenic quality and sensitivity of an area. The BLM Visual Contrast Rating system is used to assess the visual impacts, establish design standards, and provide mitigation measures for new developments. Using BLM procedures, a Visual Resource Inventory has been completed.

I. Minerals

Current Management

The area is open to entry for saleable minerals only.

The area is not open to entry for minerals classified as locatable or leasable. Entry for locatable minerals is restricted by withdrawal and entry for leasable minerals is restricted by a no surface occupancy designation in the Oil and Gas RMP/EIS Amendment of December, 1992.

Minor amounts of rock and gravel have been extracted from a site located about 1/4 mile West of the Black Hills National Cemetery, by BLM and Veterans Administration personnel for local use.

J. Hydrology

Current Management

Four streams cross the Fort Meade Planning Unit: Alkali Creek, Cottle Creek, Spring Creek, and Bear Butte Creek as shown on map 4 in appendix A. All but Bear Butte Creek are considered intermittent although they have running water for most of the year. The streams are all subject to periodic flooding. During May of 1995, Bear Butte Creek suffered extensive flood damage which left excessive deposits of silt, rock and debris. The channel was diverted with heavy equipment and a coffer dam constructed by the city to protect the Sturgis sewer line during the flood. A cooperative rehabilitation effort is underway involving the City of Sturgis, the Corps of Engineers, SD Department of Transportation, U.S. Forest Service, FEMA, NRCS, and BLM.

Fifteen reservoirs and seven springs have been constructed or developed on the planning unit. The largest of these is Fort Meade Reservoir located in the north half. It is currently being used for recreation and is excluded from livestock grazing. Bear Butte Creek is also excluded from grazing. The remaining reservoirs are all used primarily for livestock water and wildlife habitat.

Water quality is considered good to excellent. Watershed conditions are generally good throughout the area. Rest-Rotation grazing systems are consistent with watershed objectives. Ground cover is adequate in the draws to prevent silt loss. No serious erosion hazards exist on the area. Off-road-vehicle restrictions have been implemented to control soil erosion.

K. Monitoring

Current Management

A. Wildlife/Fisheries
Fish populations in Bear Butte Creek are monitored every other year.

B. Recreation
Visitor use information is collected annually through traffic counters, patrol logs, Special Recreation Use Permits, and camping fee records.

C. Cultural/Historic resources are monitored through ranger patrols to assure protection.

D. Land use and other authorized activities are monitored to assure compliance with stipulations.

E. Vegetation
Range trends are assessed through study plots and review of allotment conditions.

F. Hydrology
Water quality is monitored in Bear Butte Creek, Fort Meade Reservoir, and Upper Cottle Creek Reservoir.

CHAPTER III
AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

A brief description of the resources in the area and/or the affected environment is presented here in order to provide information essential to an understanding of the management proposals of the plan.

CLIMATE

The climate is mild with seasonal variation. The average annual temperature is 46 degrees fahrenheit. The highest recorded temperature for the area is 113 degrees fahrenheit and the lowest minus 28 degrees fahrenheit. The average frost free period is 130 days, normally occurring between May 16 and September 24.

The area receives an average annual precipitation of 18 inches. There is usually little snow accumulation during winter months, but this varies from year to year. Nearly 70 percent of the precipitation occurs during the months of April, May and June. The prevailing winds are northwesterly with high winds common during spring and late autumn.

TOPOGRAPHY

The Fort Meade Recreation Area lies on the northeastern flank of the Black Hills uplift. The north half of the unit is typical of the Great Plains region with rolling, grass-covered hills. The south half is typical of the Black Hills Region. Its steep slopes, rocky ledges, and high hills are covered with a combination of mid-grasses and ponderosa pine. The elevation varies from 3,200 to 4,300 feet with slopes facing the north and east. Bear Butte, the remains of a huge volcanic laccolith, stands at the northeast boundary of the unit.

AIR QUALITY

Air quality is typically good and visibility is generally unobstructed.

GEOLOGY

The Black Hills dome-shaped anticline covers an oval area 125 miles long and 60 miles wide. The structure along the northeast side of the uplift (which includes the Ft. Meade area) is a monocline dipping toward the plains. The uplift has exposed a nearly complete sequence of sedimentary formations ranging in age from Permian to Tertiary, all dipping away from the central core.

SOILS

Soils on the north half of the management unit belong to the Pierre Series consisting of moderately deep, sloping to level, well drained clayey soils. Permeability of the Pierre soils is very slow and runoff is slow to rapid depending on slope.

The soils of the south half are composed of two major soil series, the Lakota under the forested portions and the Butche under the grassland areas.

The Lakota series consists of deep, sloping to steep, well-drained silty soils formed under forest vegetation. Permeability of the Lakota soils is moderate and runoff is moderate to rapid.

The Butche series consists of shallow, well-drained loamy soils. It is very hard when dry and friable when moist. Permeability of the Butche soils is moderate and runoff is medium to rapid, depending on slopes.

VEGETATION

Two major vegetative types occur in the area. The first is mid-grass prairie association found on the north half and the unforested areas of the south half. The major plants in this association include Bluestem (Andropogon spp.), Western wheatgrass (Agropyron smithii), Green needlegrass (Stipa viridula), and Smooth brome (Bromus inermis).

The second major vegetative type is a typical Black Hills timber association found on the forested portions of the south half. The major species include Ponderosa pine (Pinus ponderosa), Bur oak (Quercus macrocarpa), Bluestem (Andropogon spp.), Pine grass (Calamagrositis rubescens), Canadian wild rye (Elymus canadensis), and Smooth brome (Bromus inermis).

Riparian vegetation which makes up less than 5% of the area, consists of the Prairie Cordgrass Habitat type, the

Green Ash/Common Chokecherry Habitat type, and to a minor extent the Ponderosa Pine/Common Chokecherry Habitat type. Riparian inventories are scheduled but have not been completed, however most riparian areas are considered to be in healthy condition with the exception of Bear Butte Creek which sustained flood damage during May of 1995.

WILDLIFE/FISHERIES

The listing of bird and mammal species common to the Ft. Meade area (compiled by Rose and Peterson) is impressive. This listing includes 18 mammals, 27 species of waterfowl, 22 birds of prey, 5 game birds, 43 shorebirds, and 136 songbirds.

According to the bird list compiled by the Northern Hills Birders Society, a total of 188 bird species have been observed in the Fort Meade, Bear Butte Area. One hundred seventeen species are known to nest in the area. In addition, many species rely on the area's mix of pine woods, hardwood draws, grasslands and wetlands for spring and fall stopovers.

Big Game: White-tailed deer, mule deer and antelope are found in the planning unit. Most of the animals are nomadic, moving in and out of the area.

Upland Game: Merriam's turkey is found scattered throughout the wooded areas of the planning unit. A small number of pheasants can be found along the northeast edge. Sharp-tailed grouse and Hungarian partridge are found in the midgrass prairie of the unit.

Waterfowl: The reservoirs in the planning unit support some ducks and shorebirds.

Fish: A few reservoirs in the Fort Meade Planning Unit support fish populations. Fort Meade Reservoir has a catchable rainbow trout population which is maintained by the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks on a "put and take" basis. Warm water fish such as bullheads, sunfish, and largemouth bass can be found in one small reservoir in the north unit. Bear Butte Creek also supports a small catchable population of brown trout, rainbow trout, and brook trout.

At the present time there are no threatened, endangered, or special status species.

The area is part of the transition zone between the Black Hills uplift and the prairies. Habitat on the north half of the unit consists of a mid grass prairie containing small hardwood and brushy draws. Reservoirs have emergent vegetation. Habitat on the south half is characterized by a Ponderosa pine overstory with an understory comprised of ironwood and burr oak. Shrub species include chokecherry, american plum, and western snowberry. The meadows and open areas consist of midgrass prairie.

RECREATION/VISITOR MANAGEMENT

Access

The FMRA is easily accessible to the public. Two main approach highways to the city of Sturgis (Interstate 90 and State Highway 34) pass through the planning unit. A third entrance point, commonly called the Philtown road, originates on Junction avenue across from Philtown Inn in Sturgis and passes through the Grand Pre subdivision where it joins the BLM road which runs north and south through the south half of the planning unit. This north south road, which was designated a Backcountry Byway in 1990, connects State Highway 34 on the north (Ft. Meade entrance) to Interstate 90 on the south (Cemetery entrance). The graveled Byway is accessible to all types of vehicles during the summer months. There is no maintenance in the winter.

The north half of the planning unit is accessed from a county road which runs north and south along the west edge of the unit connecting Sturgis to State Highway 79 near Bear Butte State Park. Public vehicle access from the county road is limited to the gravel road leading into Ft. Meade Reservoir. See Access Map 2 in Appendix A.

Activities and Use Zones

The Fort Meade Recreation Area offers a broad variety of resource based recreational opportunities which include hunting, fishing, horseback riding, hiking, camping, birdwatching, bicycling, picnicking, winter sports, a range for shooting muzzleloading rifles, sightseeing, and pleasure driving on a national Backcountry Byway.

Camping is allowed in two locations, Alkali Creek Trailhead and Alkali Creek Horsecamp, which is restricted to equestrians. Both are fee campgrounds. Picnicking facilities are also located at the Alkali Creek Trailhead.

Hunting is restricted to "archery only" south of Highway 34 and from Highway 34 north to the top of the ridge which marks the northern boundary of the restricted area.

Shooting of muzzleloading rifles is allowed on a range authorized through a Recreation and Public Purposes Lease to the Muzzleloaders of the Black Hills.

Fishing is currently confined to Fort Meade Reservoir and Bear Butte Creek.

A seasonal Sturgis/Ft. Meade Volksmarch is held annually on the south half of the unit. This sanctioned walking event is sponsored by the Sturgis/Ft. Meade Volksport Association and the Sturgis Chamber of Commerce.

Visitor Use Profile

The majority of recreational use on the FMRA comes from day use by visitors from the local and surrounding communities. With the large number of opportunities available, the FMRA is utilized year-round. Winter use is mainly for sledding and ice fishing by local users.

Traffic counts taken on the Backcountry Byway during the period of May through October 1995 revealed a total of 26,000 vehicles entering the area during the summer months. It is not known how many of these visits are for activities other than pleasure driving or commuting to work.

Campgrounds are used primarily in conjunction with the Centennial Trail. Most of the use is short term being 3 days or less. Camping records show 159 visitors at the Alkali Creek Horsecamp and 123 at the Alkali Creek Trailhead during 1992. In 1995 the numbers increased to 140 at the trailhead and 213 at the horsecamp. The horsecamp is a convenient stopping point for equestrians traveling the interstate highway to destinations west of the Black Hills.

Archery hunting for whitetail deer, mule deer and turkeys is one of the primary activities on the FMRA. The archery only area in the south half of the unit draws hunters from throughout South Dakota, as well as out of state.

Mountain biking is becoming a popular activity in the FMRA. The number of mountain bikers using the area is increasing every year. Special Recreation Use Permit records show group participation in mountain bike races increased from approximately 100 individuals in 1992 to almost 200 individuals in 1996.

At the present time, fishing is confined to Ft. Meade Reservoir, which is stocked with trout. Bear Butte creek provides a limited opportunity for stream fishing which is used mainly by local youngsters. Upper Cottle Creek reservoir was drained and the impoundment reconstructed in 1990 in an attempt to stop the water loss and create a larger fishery. This attempt has been unsuccessful. If the seepage can be stopped, this reservoir will provide an excellent fishery.

Trends in Recreation Use

According to recent research conducted by the Forest Service, and referenced in a report entitled "Montana Recreation Future Trends Analysis" August 1993, the most popular recreational activities by the year 2040 will be sightseeing, walking for pleasure, pleasure driving, picnicking, day-hiking, family gatherings, bicycle riding, photography, swimming, wildlife observation, visiting historic sites, and developed camping.

For people with time and/or financial constraints, extended long-distance vacations are being replaced by more frequent close to home recreation trips, increasing the importance of recreation opportunities near urban areas.

With the demand for recreational activities such as educational and "back to nature" experiences pertaining to history, culture, and the environment increasing, the FMRA is expected to see increased use for most of the activities listed above.

There is also a strong demand for additional fishing opportunities in the Sturgis area.

Although actual use records of recreational activities are not available, observations by staff members confirm a general trend of increasing use in the following activities: walking/jogging, mountain biking, horseback riding, hunting, and fishing.

Developed Recreation Facilities

Fort Meade Trailhead is a day-use graveled parking area which serves as a trailhead for the Centennial trail.

Alkali Creek Trailhead (15 acres) contains 22 picnic units, 6 fee tent camping units, restrooms, drinking water, and a one-half mile self-guided nature trail.

Alkali Creek Horsecamp (11 acres) contains 6 fee camping units with restrooms, water, tables, fire rings, and grills for equestrians.

Fort Meade Reservoir Exclosure (50 acres) contains 2 picnic tables, a unisex toilet, and the reservoir is stocked with rainbow trout by the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks.

Muzzleloader Range - This range is authorized through a Recreation and Public Purposes Lease to the Muzzleloaders of the Black Hills. Several backstops have been erected to hold targets and absorb bullets.

Veterans of Foreign Wars Memorial Chapel - This site contains picnic facilities with water and toilets. It was established and is maintained by the VFW through a Recreation and Public Purposes Lease.

Centennial Trail - Eleven miles of this 111 mile interagency trail cross the FMRA. The Centennial Trail was approved for designation as a National Recreation Trail on 6/13/96.

CULTURAL/HISTORIC/NATIVE AMERICAN VALUES

The FMRA, because of its location between Bear Butte and the Black Hills, has a great deal of cultural importance. Some notable sites are located in the planning unit. One is an early Oglala campsite on Bear Butte creek, a Ute burial ground, and several lithic scatter sites consisting of local raw material (chert and chalcedony), flakes and tools.

The early history of the Fort Meade Management Area, and its strategic proximity to the Black Hills may be the most significant feature of the unit. Its location between Bear Butte (Sacred mountain of the Native Americans) and the Black Hills was not only of great importance to the Native American people but later played a significant role in the settlement of South Dakota.

A portion of the area surrounding the present-day VA medical center is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Historic District consists of 3,180 acres, 2,180 acres administered by BLM and 1,000 acres administered by the Veterans Administration and General Services Administration. Any undertaking proposed by BLM within this area requires Section 106 and Determination of Effect consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. The remaining 3,380 acres of the FMRA outside of the Historic District is also potentially eligible for the National Register, also requiring extensive SHPO and ACHP consultation.

Historic values include the outlying portions of the original Fort Meade Military Reservation and part of the Ft. Meade area that is included in the Ft. Meade National Register District. A variety of structures and features dating as far back as the 1870's are present. Many of these remnants of early cavalry life at Fort Meade remain in good condition. Some examples include Curley Grime's grave, stone cavalry jumps, rock carvings, Fort Meade Post Cemetery, Ute Indian campsite, and Camp Fechner (an old Civilian Conservation Corp camp and World War II POW camp). The ruts of several historic trails, used for transport of passengers and freight, are still visible in places.

LAND USE AND OTHER AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES

There are a number of utilities authorized on the FMRA, including a water treatment plant, roads, powerlines, railroads, telephone cables, water and gas pipelines. Other authorized uses include: a sweat lodge for treatment of VA patients, a muzzleloader range, and a picnic and chapel area leased to the VFW. A summary is contained in appendix B.

FORESTRY

There are approximately 1300 forested acres in the FMRA, nearly all of which are located in the south half. There are about 600 acres of commercial timber, Ponderosa pine (Pinus ponderosa), with an estimated volume of 1.3 million board feet, and approximately 700 acres of noncommercial timber.

Due to a serious mountain pine beetle infestation, commercial thinning and salvage logging of beetle infested trees was initiated in 1976. Ten commercial timber sales have occurred since that time, resulting in the removal of 376 thousand board feet of commercial sawtimber. Presently there are small scattered areas needing precommercial thinning. The area which borders the Blucksburg Mountain subdivision would be a high priority for thinning mainly to reduce ladder fuels as part of a fuel break.

Mixed stands of hardwoods composed of Bur oak (Quercus Macrocarpa), Green ash (Fraxinus pennslycanica) and American elm (Ulmus americana) have provided a limited amount of fuelwood over the years. Cutting of dead and down trees has been allowed by permit only. On average less than 10 permits have been issued annually. During the last two years, fuelwood cutting has been suspended pending the approval of this plan.

The presence of Pine Sawfly (Neodiprion autumnalis) was first noticed in 1987, and by 1990 approximately 250 acres were heavily infested. Biological evaluations have been completed by the Forest Pest Management division of the U.S. Forest Service. The sawfly population is expected to decline from natural causes. With the exception of this infestation, the pine stand is generally in good health.

FIRE MANAGEMENT

Wildfire suppression has been accomplished through the use of agreements with the Fort Meade Fire Department, the Sturgis Volunteer Fire Department, and the South Dakota

Department of Forestry. Fire management agreements and activities are coordinated with other agencies and fire departments by the Miles City District division of operations. Information contained in the Fire Management Activity Plan for the Miles City District indicates that historically an average of five wildfires have occurred annually on the FMRA. These fires which were primarily man-caused, burned an average of less than ten acres. Many of these fires were caused by sparks from trains passing through the area. Due to the quick response time by the nearby Fort Meade Fire Department, fire size has been kept to a minimum.

In 1985, a research study entitled "Impacts of Fire On Indicator Species In Hardwood Stands On The Northern High Plains" was initiated by Carolyn Hull Sieg at the Rocky Mountain Forest & Range Experiment Station in Rapid City. This study was completed in 1991. The results which are outlined in her dissertation on the ecology of bur oak woodlands, indicated that prescribed burning could be used as a management tool to rejuvenate decadent bur oak woodlands.

The use of prescribed fire was allowed in prior planning documents but has not been used as a regular management tool on a scheduled basis. A 280 acre prescribed burn was programmed for the spring of 1993 but has not been completed yet because of either improper fuel moisture conditions or funding constraints.

LIVESTOCK GRAZING

In the early 60's, the Veterans Administration transferred total administrative and management responsibility of FMRA to the Bureau of Land Management. Bidding for livestock forage has been in effect at FMRA since that time.

Rangelands contain two basic types of vegetation communities; upland and riparian. Upland vegetation communities occur on dry sites and are by far the most widespread. Riparian vegetation communities occur in wet areas and occupy less than 5% of rangelands. The uplands are in late seral condition. Riparian areas are considered to be healthy, and scheduled inventories will provide the data needed to confirm condition.

Livestock Vegetation Contracts for two grazing tracts are issued every three years at the FMRA. The contracts are unique to the BLM's standard grazing adjudication practices. Grazing use is awarded to individuals with the highest bid.

The FMRA has been divided into two grazing allotments: Bear Butte and Fort Meade. See Map 3 in Appendix A. An Allotment Management Plan (AMP) was developed for both allotments in 1979. The AMP management concepts are still in use.

In addition to the two AMPs, South Dakota State University, under a Recreation and Public Purposes lease, uses 600 acres for cattle research. The SDSU research involves progeny testing and weight-gain studies. The R&PP lease is adjacent to the Fort Meade AMP to the east.

The following range improvements have been constructed on the FMRA.

The northern portion of the unit (north of Highway 34) contains one well, 6 miles of pipeline with 10 water tanks, 3 developed springs, 10 dams, and is fenced into 4 pastures. The southern portion of the unit (south of Highway 34) contains one well, 6.5 miles of pipeline with 13 water tanks supplied by a spring, one artificial watershed with a tank, two guzzlers, four developed springs, ten dams, and is fenced into four pastures. The entire FMRA is encompassed by 26 miles of boundary fences and 8 miles of interior fences.

VISUAL RESOURCES

The Fort Meade area possesses a variety of scenery ranging from flat grass-covered prairies, to steep rocky ledges, and pine-covered hills. The area has been inventoried and mapped using VRM techniques to classify visual resource zones.

MINERALS

Several materials which are classified as saleable minerals are found in the FMRA. These include sand and gravel and other materials not subject to regulation under the 1872 Mining Law.

There is historical evidence that some sandstone, gravel and sand have been removed in the past.

HYDROLOGY

Four streams cross the Fort Meade Planning Unit: Alkali Creek, Cottle Creek, Spring Creek, and Bear Butte Creek. See map 4 in appendix A. All, except Bear Butte Creek, are considered intermittent although they have running water for most of the year. The streams are all subject to periodic flooding.

During May of 1995, Bear Butte Creek suffered extensive flood damage which left excessive silt and rock deposition. In the process of protecting the Sturgis sewer line, heavy equipment was used by the city for channel diversion, and a coffer dam was constructed.

Twenty reservoirs and seven springs have been constructed or developed on the planning unit. The largest of these is Fort Meade Reservoir located in the north half. It is currently being used for recreation and is excluded from grazing. The impoundment on Upper Cottle Creek reservoir was reconstructed in 1990 in an unsuccessful effort to stop the leakage that was occurring with the existing structure. The remaining reservoirs are all used primarily for livestock water and wildlife habitat.

CHAPTER IV
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Because of the general nature of this analysis and the lack of numerical and statistical information regarding the area's resources, impacts in this chapter are often expressed in relative terms. Impacts may be either positive or negative, and are measured in relationship to the current resource situation or condition.

Site specific project environmental assessments may be required as the plan is implemented and these will address site specific, direct, indirect and cumulative effects of the proposed projects.

Implementation of the proposed action will not result in the significant irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES FOR ALTERNATIVE A - PROPOSED ACTION

A. CULTURAL/HISTORIC RESOURCES

Designation of the area as an ACEC highlights the importance of the cultural/historic resources within the FMRA. Over the long term cultural resources will be better protected by actively seeking funding to carry out a program of inventory, documentation and stabilization. Opportunities for interpretation of these resources would be enhanced, thereby increasing user awareness and enjoyment. Increased use and awareness may result in the potential for more vandalism or sites may be inadvertently harmed by the public. Inadvertent vandalism may be lessened by educating the visiting public, and by increased patrols and visitor contact. Certain segments of the public will not respond, so some level of vandalism is expected to continue. Where sites are being damaged by the public or when such damage can be anticipated, action will be taken to mitigate the problem. Measures will include public education, monitoring, law enforcement or others.

B. WILDLIFE/FISHERIES HABITAT

Implementation of the proposed alternative will have a positive impact on wildlife habitat. Protecting existing habitat and providing additional habitat enhancement would be beneficial to wildlife. Using guidance from an approved Snag Management Plan and limiting removal of dead trees (standing and down) will maintain and improve densities of snags, cavity and den trees and enhance opportunities in the area for many dependent wildlife species. The presence or absence of this habitat component could affect many species of birds and mammals such as the Northern Saw Whet Owl (Aegolius acadicas) and the Northern Flying Squirrel (Glaucomys sabrinus). Leaving a minimum of 2.6 snags per acre with a diameter at breast height (dbh) of 10 inches or greater will benefit woodpeckers, chickadees, nuthatches and brown creepers which commonly use snags as nesting and foraging substrates.

Limiting recreational development to confined zones, (see map 5 in appendix) restricting road construction and other disturbances will reduce interaction between visitors and wildlife species and maintain existing habitat.

Restrictions on the use of chemicals such as pesticides and herbicides will be most beneficial to neotropical birds.

Gathering monitoring data is critical to understanding the complex interactions of competing resources (livestock grazing, forestry, recreation, etc.) and their effect on riparian habitat. Implementing an aggressive monitoring program, to insure that upland and riparian objectives are being met, would have a positive effect on wildlife. Improved upland and riparian vegetation would increase and diversify cover for many wildlife species.

The net effect of various recreational, forestry and grazing actions would result in the maintenance or improvement of timber stands, hardwood stringers, and riparian areas to the benefit of big game, upland game, waterfowl, raptors, and fish. Food sources, nesting, broodrearing, and thermal cover would be maintained or improved for most wildlife.

C. RECREATION/VISITOR MANAGEMENT

The following options were discussed when representatives from BLM met
with a group of landowners and interested parties to discuss maintenance responsibility on the Philtown road: (1) annexation and subsequent maintenance by the city, (2)maintenance by the county, (3) maintenance by BLM, 4) maintenance by the adjacent landowners, and (5) closure of the road.

During the discussion, the BLM Area Manager expressed BLM's concern that private landowners along the Philtown road should not have to bear the financial burden and/or the liabilities associated with use of the road for access to the FMRA.

Option number 5 was chosen to mitigate the issue since neither the county nor the city was willing to maintain the road. An easement would have been necessary on the private section of the road before BLM would expend funds for maintenance. This was determined to be financially unacceptable and unnecessary for access to the area.

Closure of the Philtown road (see map 2 in appendix A) will reduce access to the south half of the FMRA to two entrance points. This will cause an inconvenience to some visitors by increasing the distance they must travel to enter the recreation area. It will, however, help resolve the maintenance issue for residents of the Grand Pre subdivision by eliminating the traffic caused by visitor use of the area. In the case of emergencies such as the Bear Butte flood in 1995, the road would be opened at the request of local authorities. It would also be opened for short periods during the winter to allow access to a popular sledding hill.

Confining recreational facility development to designated zones limits the number, size and types of facilities allowed. See map 5 appendix A. Limiting recreational development also helps protect key wildlife habitats such as riparian areas. Construction of recreational facilities such as pullouts, parking areas and trails will result in a minimal permanent loss of vegetation within those zones designated for such development. Off road vehicle restrictions reduce the potential negative impacts to soils and vegetation from erosion and plant degradation.

Retaining the Backcountry Byway designation and promoting the byway program will result in increased public awareness and enjoyment of the recreational opportunities and historical attractions in the area.

Changes to traffic levels and vehicle types are anticipated. The number of tour buses and motor homes may increase on the narrow winding road, thereby increasing the potential for safety hazards to other motorists, mountain bikers and joggers using the road. Other safety hazards include livestock at large which sometimes wander onto the unfenced road, icy road conditions during the winter months, excessive speed on blind curves, and obscured vision due to vegetation in certain locations. These impacts will be mitigated through proper signing, temporary winter road closures, enforcement of speed limits, and reduction of vegetation in hazardous areas. If accidents become a frequent occurrence, restricting the byway to one way traffic may be considered.

The additional firearm restriction areas (see map 6, appendix A) will result in a safer environment for adjacent landowners in the Pine Cones Estates development and fishermen at Fort Meade Reservoir.

D. LAND USE AND OTHER AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES

Protecting the visual and natural integrity of the area by minimizing intrusions such as roads, powerlines, etc. will provide a higher quality physical setting for the recreational opportunities that are available.

Implementation of the proposed action would restrict current rights-of-way, lease and permit holders to their present operations and provide for future expansion only within the parameters of their existing areas of authorization. New rights-of-way, and leases would only be allowed provided they are compatible with ACEC management objectives. This may or may not make less public land available for these activities within the ACEC.

Establishment of VRM classes will limit the type of activities or projects allowed within the area. The establishment of designated utility corridors will restrict the placement of transmission and distribution facilities. Land use allocations will minimize the cumulative effect of projects authorized on a case by case basis and help protect the areas natural integrity and scenic qualities.

E. FORESTRY

Implementation of the proposed action will have a positive impact on the forest resource. Ponderosa Pine and hardwood stands will be maintained in a healthy condition by allowing thinning and harvest of wood products on a limited level that is compatible with riparian, wildlife, and visual resource management guidelines. Allowing the restricted harvest of wood products will also help reduce fuel loads and the potential for wildfire while reducing conflicts with key wildlife habitat components as described above under section A.

Compliance with visual quality guidelines may have a minimal impact on the potential for commercial timber harvest due to the establishment of VRM classes. The amount and location of timber harvest could be restricted to a minor degree by VRM objectives.

Impacts to recreational uses from timber harvest are expected to be low due to the small acreage involved and the amount of harvest that would be needed to meet other resource objectives.

Restricting the issuance of fuelwood permits to specified periods of the year will prevent woodcutter conflicts with other users such as archery hunters. Nesting turkeys will also be protected from disturbance by woodcutting activities.

F. FIRE MANAGEMENT

Implementation of a scheduled prescribed burning program could enhance native plants, reduce the spread of exotic plant species, reduce hazardous fuels, and increase forage production. Temporary removal of the grass and duff layer would improve field examination conditions for cultural surveys.

Increasing the use of prescribed burning also carries the risk that an escape may occur resulting in the loss of nontarget resources. Mitigation measures for negative impacts will be contained in the site specific burn plan and EA.

G. LIVESTOCK GRAZING

Insuring the proper functioning condition of uplands and riparian areas through inventory and monitoring will have a positive impact on rangeland vegetation and wildlife habitat. Modification of the AMP may become necessary as a result of the inventory data. Reductions in AUMs' or changes in seasons of use might be required to meet objectives for wildlife and riparian areas.

H. VISUAL RESOURCES

Implementation of the proposed action will have a positive effect on the natural physical setting of the area. Establishment of VRM management classes and land use authorization guidelines will restrict authorization of discretionary activities unless the VRM objectives or land use guidelines are met. See map 7 in appendix A and also appendix D for descriptions of VRM class objectives.

I. MINERALS

Under this alternative, the entire planning unit would be closed to all locatable, leasable, and saleable mineral activity including fill material.

J. HYDROLOGY

Water Quality would not change under the proposed action.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES FOR ALTERNATIVE B - NO ACTION

Under the no action alternative, the area would continue to be managed according to the existing Recreation Area Management Plan of 1981.

A. CULTURAL/HISTORIC RESOURCES

Under the no action alternative cultural resources within the FMRA would continue to be managed and protected under the guidance of the Cultural Resource Management Plan without the ACEC designation. Cultural sites would most likely not receive the appropriate management they require.

B. WILDLIFE/FISHERIES

Without specific guidance for special wildlife habitats such as hardwood draws, snags, or riparian areas, and restrictions on recreational development, land use authorizations, forestry actions and grazing; associated wildlife and their habitats may experience a negative impact in the long term from: removal of snags by fuelwood cutting; a reduction of adequate thermal, escape, and nesting or rearing cover from livestock grazing and thinning activities.

C. RECREATION/VISITOR MANAGEMENT

Under this alternative the Philtown entrance road would remain open to FMRA visitors year round. The maintenance issue would not be resolved and the adjacent landowners in the subdivision would be required to maintain the private section of the road and bear the financial burden and liability for visitor traffic entering or exiting the FMRA. If not maintained by the subdivision residents, the road would continue to deteriorate from a lack of maintenance and the safety hazard would increase.

Impacts from the Backcountry Byway Designation would be the same as for the proposed alternative, although public awareness of historic and recreational attractions on the FMRA would grow at a slower rate due to a lack of exposure.

D. LAND USE AND OTHER AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES

The visual and natural integrity of the FMRA could experience a negative impact from the cumulative effects of an increasing number of reasonably foreseeable land use requests for the area. Examples of requests already received include a county road, a water treatment plant, a bike path, a university, a shooting range, a communication site, and the removal of 300,000 cubic yards of fill material. Individually, projects such as these may not cause a significant impact, but collectively they may impact aesthetics, destroy wildlife habitat, and reduce recreational opportunities, without specific objectives to guide authorization decisions.

E. FORESTRY

Forestry practices would continue to be coordinated with other activities as outlined in the existing RAMP. Without the benefit of specific management guidance or objectives, key wildlife habitats such as hardwood draws and snags for cavity nesting birds could be negatively impacted by fuelwood cutting activities, precommercial thinning, or commercial timber harvest.

F. FIRE MANAGEMENT

Under this alternative, wildfire would continue to be suppressed. Without the use of prescribed fire or the use of timber management practices, understory species within pine stands would eventually be crowded out by pine reproduction and a lack of sunlight, nutrients, and water. The potential for wildfire would increase with the higher fuel loads and ladder effect of the dense pine reproduction.

G. LIVESTOCK GRAZING

Grazing by livestock would continue as outlined in the Fort Meade Allotment Management Plan. Overall, minimal negative livestock impacts are occurring on the recreation area. The main impacts are forage utilization on both riparian and upland habitats and interactions with other resources such as wildlife and recreation.

H. VISUAL RESOURCES

The visual resources in the FMRA may receive a negative impact from an accumulation of individually authorized activities without VRM guidelines to insure that visual integrity is maintained over the entire area.

I. MINERALS

The area would remain open for saleable minerals, however potential requests would be considered on a case by case basis and most likely denied.
Small quantities of sand and gravel would continue to be removed from the existing pit by BLM and VA personnel for maintenance of range developments.

J. HYDROLOGY

Under existing management water quality in Bear Butte Creek and Fort Meade Reservoir is not impacted from grazing since the area is fenced out of the allotment. Water quality standards in the other reservoirs and along intermittent creeks are impacted by livestock during short periods of time. These impacts are considered to be minimal.

Cooperation with other agencies and the city of Sturgis to resolve the Bear Butte Creek flooding problems would continue.

CHAPTER V
MITIGATION AND MONITORING

MITIGATION

The preferred alternative includes numerous management actions which are designed to mitigate all impacts to acceptable levels. Full implementation of the proposed action will have an overall positive impact on the affected environment. Therefore, there are no additional mitigating measures required.

MONITORING

A comprehensive monitoring plan has been developed for the affected environment and is located in the monitoring section of the ACEC management plan, Part I-K Monitoring.

22

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CHAPTER VI
CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

A complete list of the persons, organizations, and agencies that contributed to, or that were involved through consultation and coordination with the assimilation of this document can be found below.

FEDERAL, STATE, AND COUNTY AGENCIES

Department of Game, Fish and Parks
South Dakota Department of Agriculture, Division of Forestry
Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station
U.S. Forest Service
South Dakota Department of Transportation
South Dakota Department of Tourism
South Dakota State University
Department of Veterans Affairs Fort Meade Medical Center
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
Bear Butte State Park
Soil Conservation Service - Elk Creek District
Black Hills National Cemetery
West River Ag Research & Extension Center
Meade School District
Meade County Commission
Meade County Highway Department
Meade County Extension Agent
Meade County Sheriff
City of Sturgis
State Historic Preservation Office

ORGANIZATIONS

Old Fort Meade Museum and Historic Research Association
National Wild Turkey Federation
Wildlife Federation
South Dakota Wildlife Society
Black Hills Group - Sierra Club
Natural Resource Users Coalition
Multiple Use Coalition
The Ecology Center
Elk Creek Conservation District
Blucksburg Homeowners Association
Pine Cone Estates Homeowners Association
Sturgis Chamber of Commerce
Sturgis Fire Department
Centennial Bike Path Committee
Disabled American Veterans

USER GROUPS

Black Hills Mountain Bike Association
South Dakota Trailriders Association
Bit and Spur Club
Gunsel Horse Adventures
Muzzleloaders
Boy Scouts of America
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Black Hills Sportsmen
South Dakota Bowhunters
Hills and Plains Sports Club
Turkey Track Club
Northern Hills Birders
Williston Basin Interstate Pipeline Co.
Black Hills Power and Light Co.
Northwestern Bell

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Crystal Christensen
Anita Matz
Diana Greslin
Northwestern Trust
Donald Phillipar
Glover Trust
Rita Weber
Ervin Fritz
William Dale
Inga Adamski
Jim Roth

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Laverne Elliot
Marilyn Bender
Kevin Forrester
Tom Leatherwood
Marjorie Linney
Ernest E. Miller
Francis Haley
Tex Alden
Ken Simonsen
Jon R. Holmgren
Seth Kunert
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Lily Odell
Paul Bisson
Thomas Hayes
Keven Jacobson
Chuck Nelson
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Tina Dearmore
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Cal Bratland
Terry Glover
Norman Hale
Bob Davis
Louis Chaney
Fred Anderson
John Coyle
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Jim Allison
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DISTRIBUTION OF DOCUMENT

The following individuals and government agencies requested and were sent a copy of this plan amendment/ ACEC plan.

Dale Tribby
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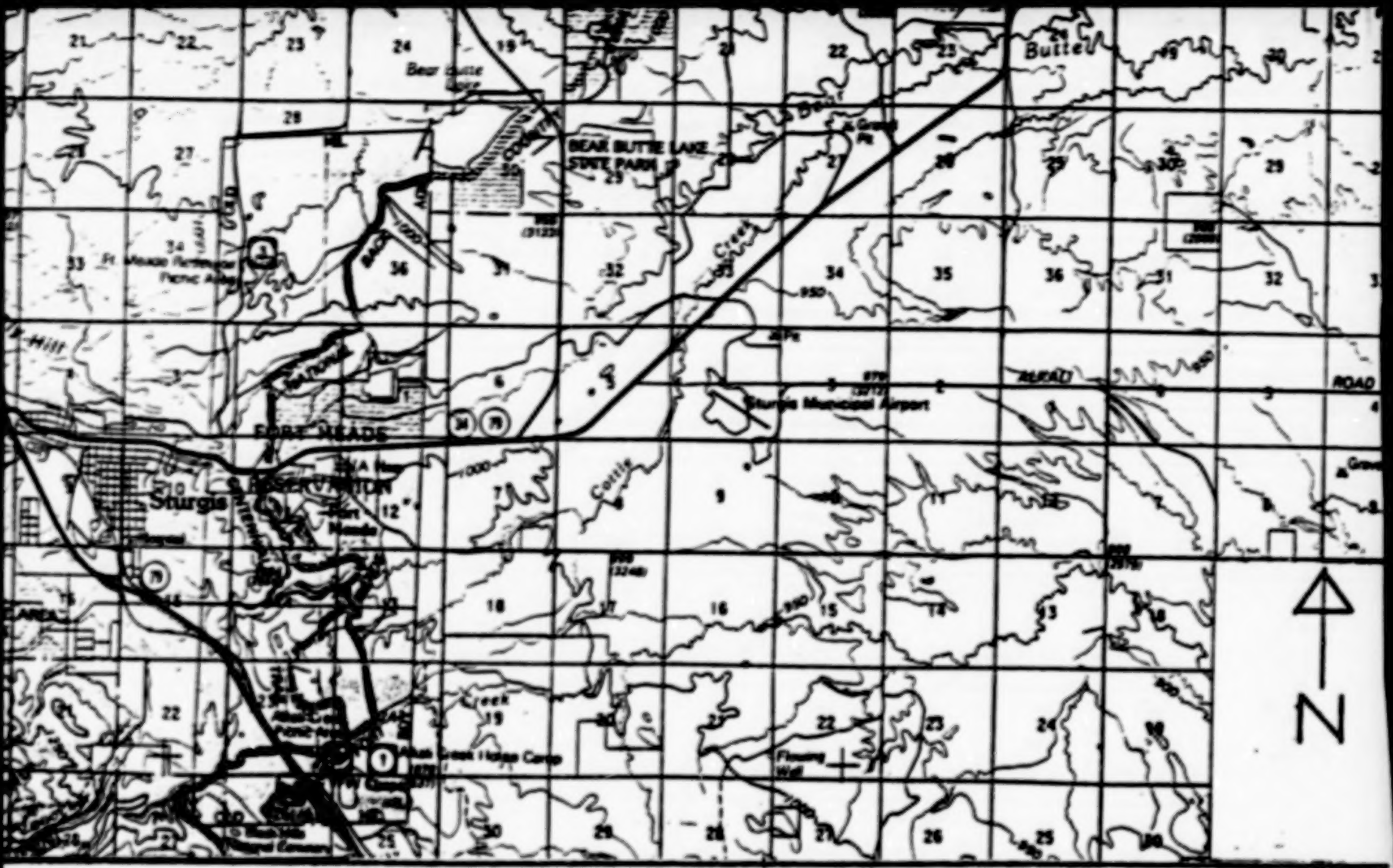
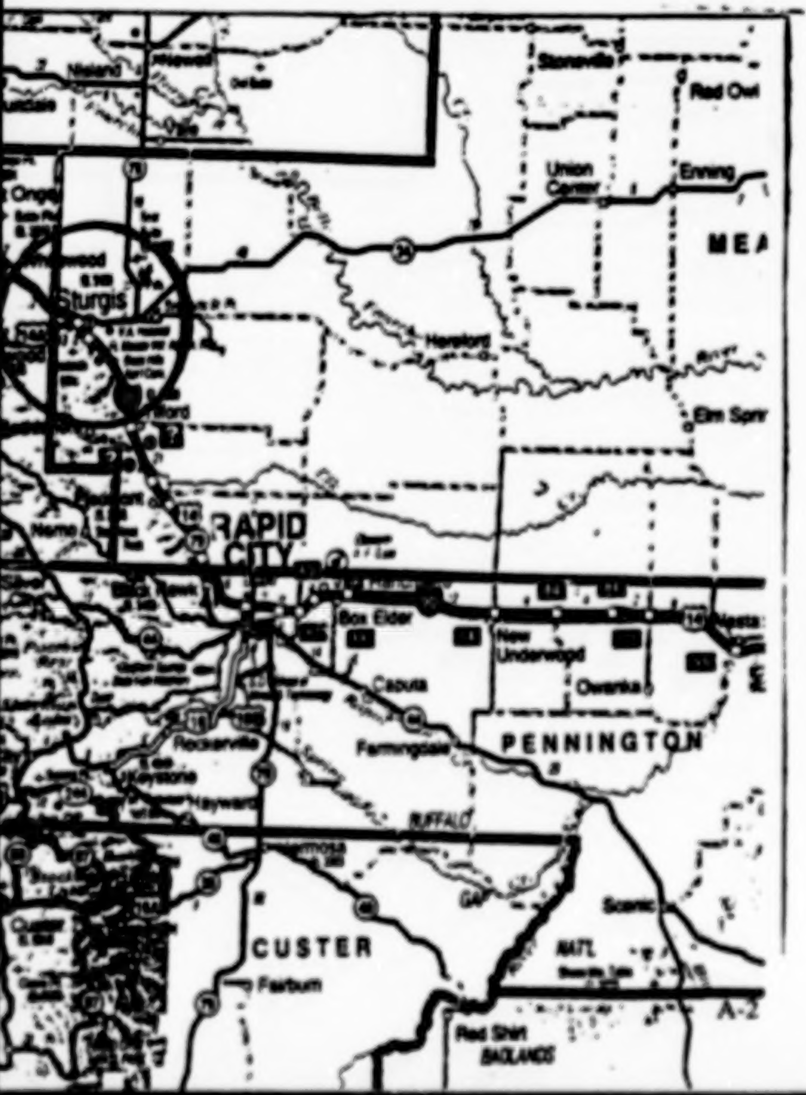
South Dakota Department of Game,Fish & Parks

APPENDIX A (MAPS)

1. LOCATION AND BOUNDARIES
2. ACCESS
3. GRAZING ALLOTMENTS
4. RIPARIAN AREAS
5. RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ZONES
6. FIREARM RESTRICTION AREAS
7. VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CLASSES


Bear Butte Lake
BEAR BUTTE LAKE STATE PARK
Ft Meade Recreation Picnic Area
FORT MEADE
Sturgis
Sturgis Municipal Airport
Creek
Cattle
Flowing Well
ROAD
N



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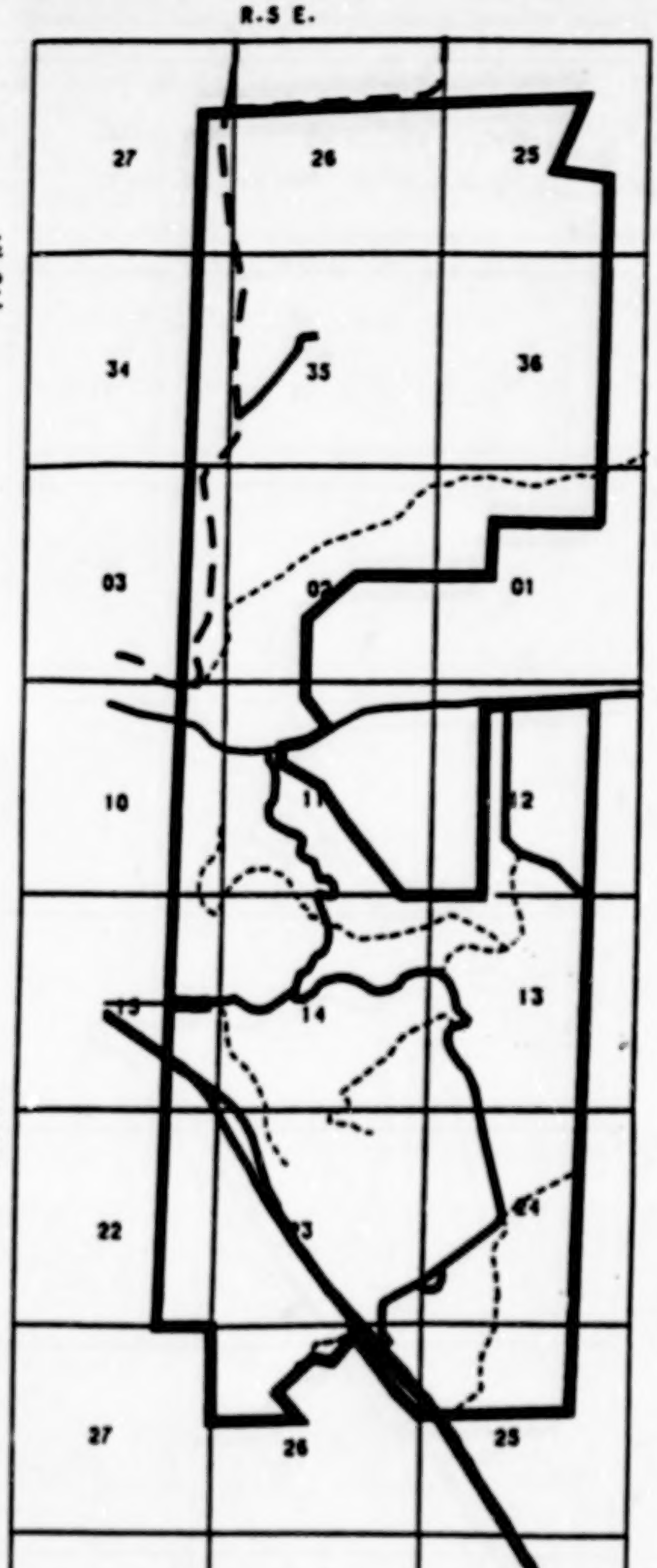
1996

MAP 1

LOCATION AND BOUNDARY



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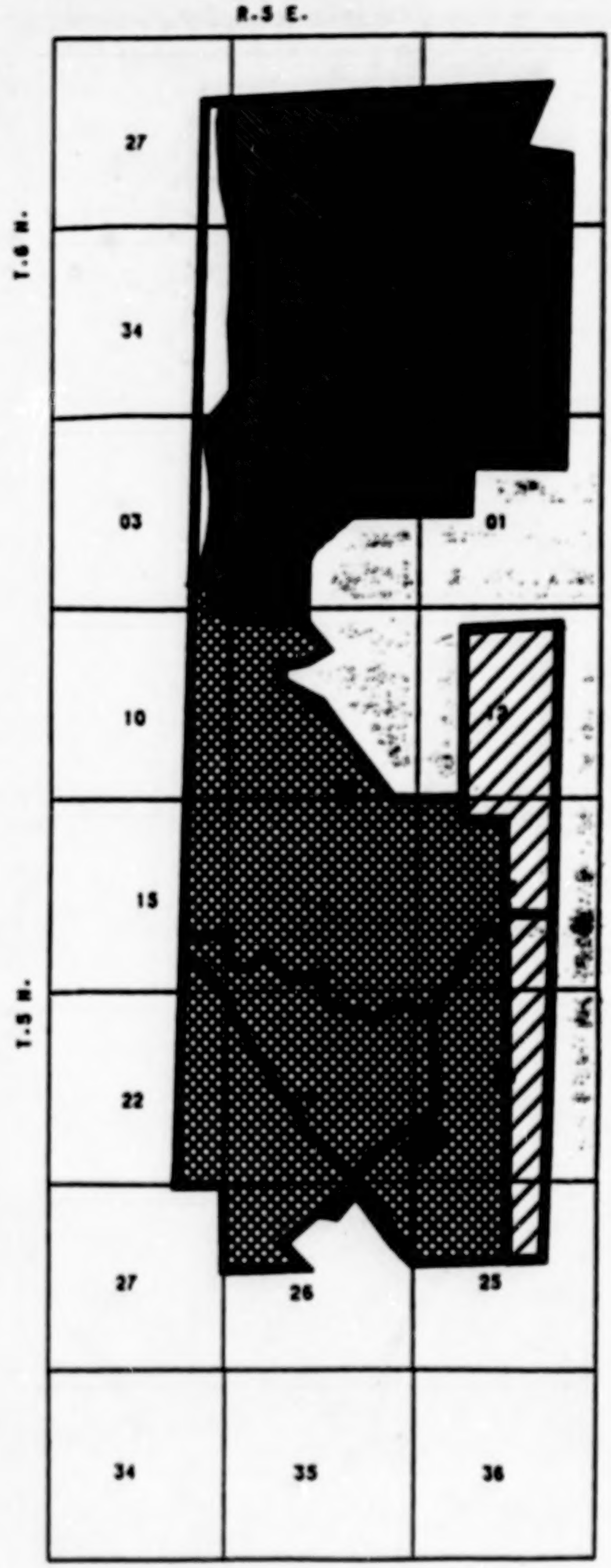
MAP 2

ACCESS

LEGEND

- ▬ **Philtown Road Closure**
- ━ **ACEC Boundary**
- — — — **County Maintained Road**
- ═ **BLM Maintained Roads**
- - - - - - - **Restricted Access Roads**
- ─ **Philtown Road**
- ━ **Highway 34**
- ═ **Interstate 90**



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MAP 3

GRAZING ALLOTMENTS

LEGEND

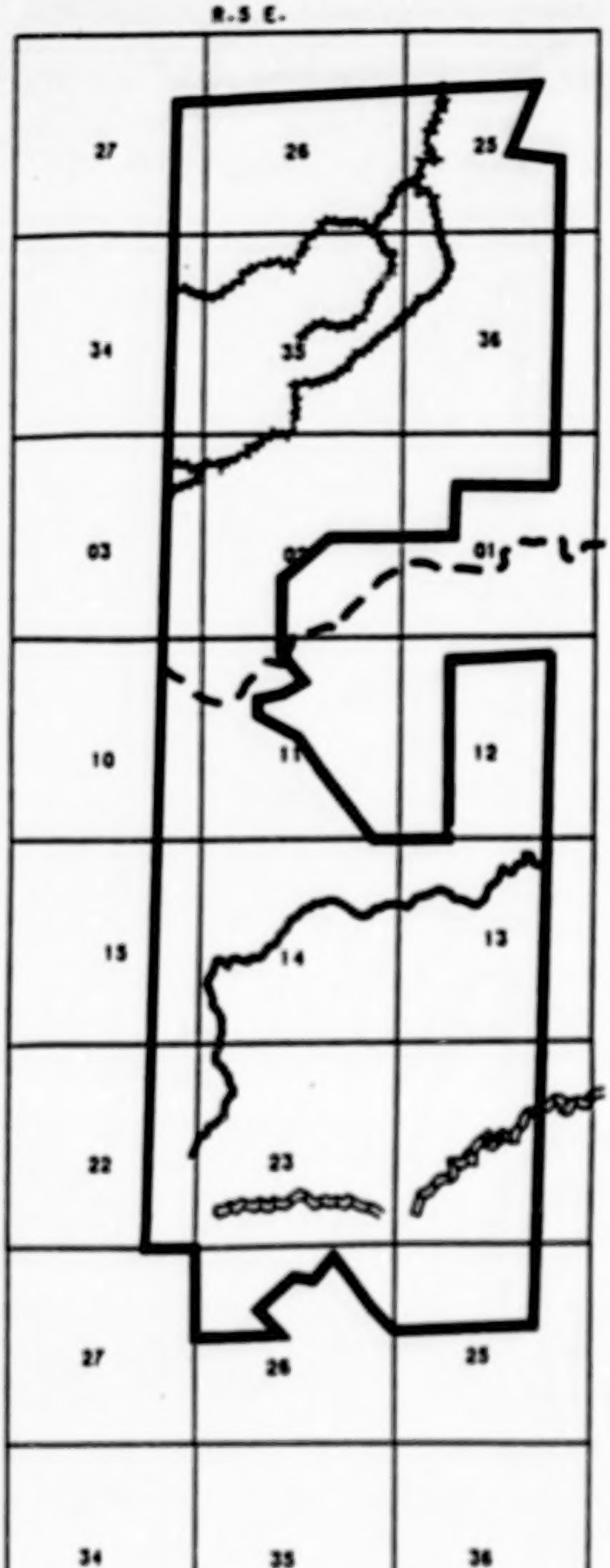
▧ **Bear Butte Allotment**

▩ **Fort Meade Allotment**

▨ **SDSU R&PP Lease (Grazing)**

━ **ACEC Boundary**

━ **Pasture Fences**



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MAP 4

RIPARIAN AREAS

LEGEND

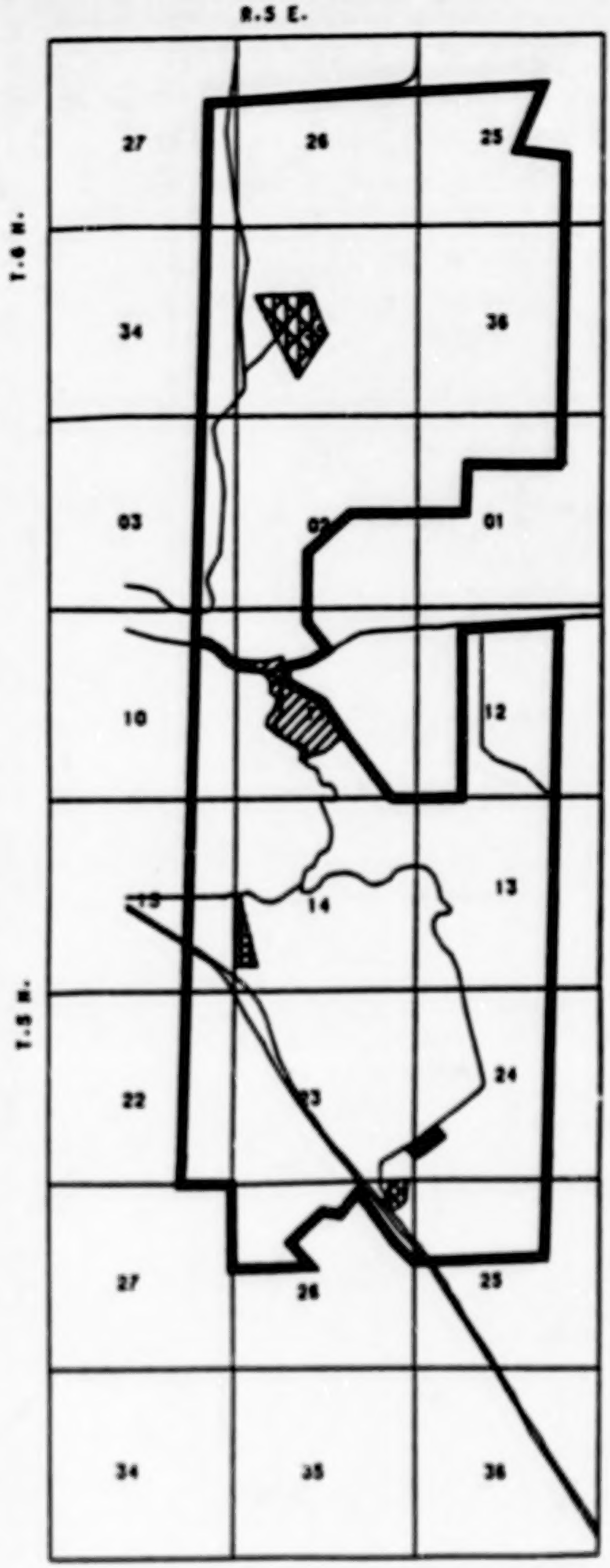
━━━ **ACEC Boundary**

◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇ **Spring Creek**

— — - **Bear Butte Creek**

▬▬▬ **Cottle Creek**

▭▭▭ **Alkali Creek**



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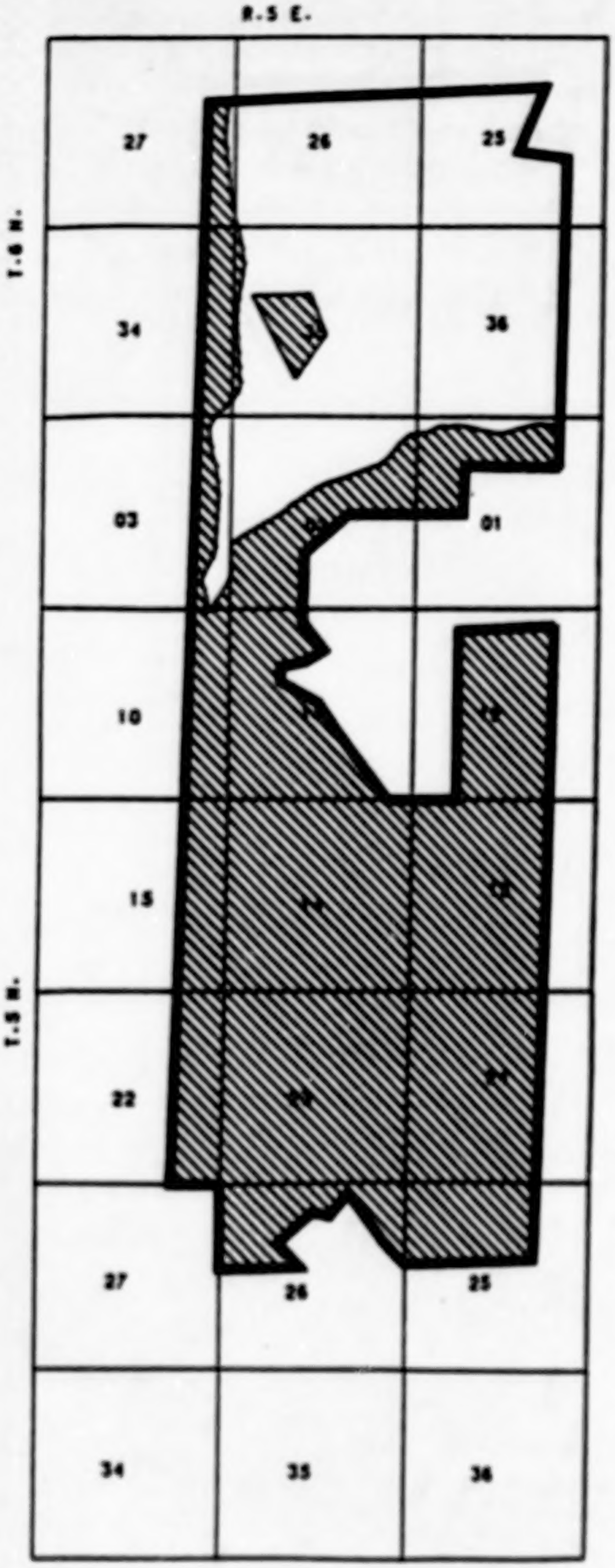
MAP 5

RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ZONES

LEGEND

▩ **Fort Meade Reservoir**
▨ **Camp Fechner**
▦ **Cottle Creek Reservoir**
■ **Alkali Creek Trailhead**
▩ **VFW Chapel**
━ **ACEC Boundary**
— **Roads**



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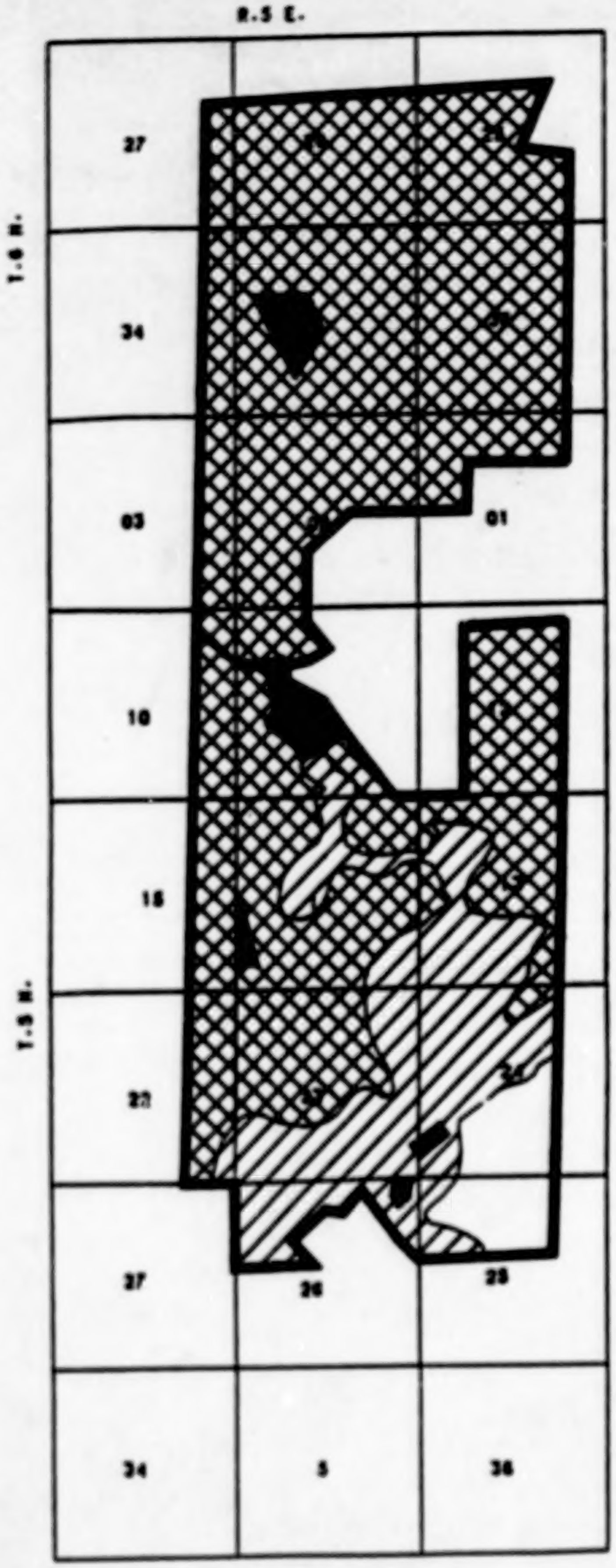
MAP 6

FIREARM RESTRICTION AREA

LEGEND

▨ Firearm Restriction Area

━ ACEC Boundary



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MAP 7

VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

LEGEND

- ▨ Class 2
- ▦ Class 3
- ■ Class 4
- — ACEC Boundary

APPENDIX B
LANDS ACTIONS CURRENT TO 07/96

DATE	NUMBER	TYPE	PURPOSE
12/1878		Executive Order	Withdrawal Military Reservation
06/6/1960	2112	Public Land Order	Withdrawal Jurisdiction BLM
01/15/1981	5816	Public Land Order	Withdrawal VA-Post Cemetery
04/1/1948	461	Public Land Order	Withdrawal National Cemetery
04/1948	074537	Withdrawal	Dept. of Army
03/1966	0073118	Withdrawal	Veterans Administration
07/1970	016089	Withdrawal	Veterans Administration
07/1972	022456	Withdrawal	Veterans Administration
09/1970	016784	Acquisition	Federal Aid Hwy.
02/1913	0013797	Right-of-Way	Power Transmission Line
09/1928	014258	Right-of-Way	O&G Pipeline
10/1955	0025995	Right-of-Way	O&G Pipelines
05/1962	0050948	Right-of-Way	Fed. Aid Highways
11/1965	0071094	Right-of-Way	Power Transmission Line
04/1966	0073275	Right-of-Way	Roads-BLM-MCDO
11/1968	008906	Right-of-Way	SD Fish & Wildlife
09/1969	002232	Right-of-Way	Power Transmission Line
10/1969	0027946	Right-of-Way	Power Transmission Line
12/1973	027008	Right-of-Way	Recreation Site
08/1978	040907	Right-of-Way	Tele&Tele, FLPMA
09/1980	046358	Right of Way	Roads
08/1981	050250	Right-of-Way	Water Facility
06/1982	054057	Right-of-Way	O&G Pipeline
06/1982	099015	Right-of-Way	Power Transmission Line
06/1984	040094	Right-of-Way	Roads
09/1984	059944	Right-of-Way	Roads
06/1985	061102	Right-of-Way	Tele&Tele, FLPMA
09/1986	014260	Right-of-Way	RR - Special
08/1988	0070334	Right-of-Way	Tele&Tele, FLPMA
06/1989	074900	Right-of-Way	Water Facility
06/1993	006821	Right-of-Way	Sturgis Water Facility
10/1961	0034038	R&PP Lease	City of Sturgis
10/1962	0049548	R&PP Lease	City of Sturgis
08/1966	072147	R&PP Lease	City of Sturgis
10/1973	0025275	R&PP Lease	City of Sturgis
08/1978	042387	R&PP Lease	Muzzleloaders Range
10/1984	00254801	R&PP Lease	SD State University
07/1986	006996501	R&PP Lease	VFW

APPENDIX C
RECREATION OPPORTUNITY SPECTRUM CLASSES

The following chart describes each of the six ROS classes in terms of (1) experience opportunities, (2) setting opportunities, and (3) activity opportunities. These descriptions provide a general overview of the opportunities included in each class. These overview statements do not describe each class in detail, but rather provide a point of departure from which the planner or manager can develop more precise prescriptions for each class based on specific situations encountered in field operations. The listing of activity opportunities is provided for illustrative purposes. It is not an all-inclusive list of activity opportunities on the public land.

PRIMITIVE

1. Experience Opportunity - Opportunity for isolation from the sights and sounds of man, to feel a part of the natural environment, to have a high degree of challenge and risk, and to use outdoor skills.

2. Setting Opportunity - Area is characterized by essentially unmodified natural environment of fairly large size. Concentration of users is very low and evidence of other users is minimal. The area is managed to be essentially free from evidence of man-induced restrictions and controls. Only facilities essential for resource protection are used. No facilities for comfort or convenience of the user are provided. Spacing of groups is informal and dispersed to minimize contacts between groups. Motorized use within the area is not permitted.

3. Activity Opportunity - Camping, hiking, climbing, enjoying scenery or natural features, nature study, photography, spelunking, hunting (big game, small game, upland birds, waterfowl), ski touring and snowshoeing, swimming, diving (skin and scuba), fishing, canoeing, sailing, and river running (non-motorized craft).

SEMI-PRIMITIVE, NONMOTORIZED

1. Experience Opportunity - Some opportunity for isolation from the sights and sounds of man, but not as important as for primitive opportunities. Opportunity to have high degree of interaction with the natural environment, to have moderate challenge and risk, and to use outdoor skills.

2. Setting Opportunity - Area is characterized by a predominately unmodified natural environment of moderate to large size. Concentration of users is low, but there is often evidence of other area users. On-site controls and restrictions may be present, but are subtle. Facilities are provided for the protection of resource values and the safety of users only. Spacing of groups may be formalized to disperse use and limit contacts between groups. Motorized use is not permitted.

3. Activity Opportunity - Camping, hiking, climbing, enjoying scenery or natural features, nature study, photography, spelunking, hunting (big game, small game, upland birds, waterfowl), ski touring and snowshoeing, swimming, diving (skin and scuba), fishing, canoeing, sailing, and river running (non-motorized craft.

SEMIPRIMITIVE, MOTORIZED

1. Experience Opportunity - Some opportunity for isolation from the sights and sounds of man, but not as important as for primitive opportunities. Opportunity to have high degree of interaction with the natural environment, to have moderate challenge and risk, and to use outdoor skills. Explicit opportunity to use motorized equipment while in the area.

2. Setting Opportunity - Area is characterized by a predominately unmodified natural environment of moderate to large size. Concentration of users is low, but there is often evidence of other area users. On-site controls and restrictions may be present, but are subtle. Facilities are provided for the protection of resource values and safety of users only. Spacing of groups may be formalized to disperse use and limit contacts between groups. Motorized use is permitted.

3. Activity Opportunity - Same as the above, plus the following. ORV Use (4-WD, Dune Buggy, Dirt Bike, Snowmobile, Power Boating).

ROADED NATURAL

1. Experience Opportunity - About equal opportunities for affiliation with other user groups and for isolation from sights and sounds of man. Opportunity to have a high degree of interaction with the natural environment. Chal-

35

lenge and risk opportunities are not very important except in specific challenging activities. Practice of outdoor skills may be important. Opportunities for both motorized and nonmotorized recreation are present.

2. Setting Opportunity - Area is characterized by a generally natural environment with moderate evidence of the sights and sounds of man. Resource modification and utilization practices are evident, but harmonize with the natural environment. Concentration of users is low to moderate with facilities sometimes provided for group activity. On-site controls and restrictions offer some sense of security. Rustic facilities are provided for user convenience as well as for safety and resource protection. Conventional motorized use is provided for in construction standards and design of facilities.

3. Activity Opportunity - All activities listed previously plus the following: picnicking, rock collecting, wood gathering, auto touring, downhill skiing, snowplay, ice skating, water skiing, and other sports, hang gliding, interpretive use, rustic resorts and organized camps.

RURAL

1. Experience Opportunity - Opportunity to experience affiliation with individuals and groups are prevalent as is the convenience of sites and opportunities. These factors are generally more important than the natural setting. Opportunities for wildland challenges, risk taking, and testing are unimportant, except in those activities involving challenge and risk.

2. Setting Opportunity - Area is characterized by substantially modified natural environment. Resource modification and utilization practices are obvious. Sights and sounds of man are readily evident, and the concentration of users is often moderate to high. A considerable number of facilities are designed for use by a large number of people. Facilities are often provided for specific activities. Developed sites, roads and trails, are designed for moderate to high use. Moderate densities are provided far away from developed sites. Facilities for intensive motorized use are available.

3. Activity Opportunity - All activities listed previously, plus the following: competitive games, spectator sports, bicycling, jogging, outdoor concerts, and modern resorts.

MODERN URBAN

1. Experience Opportunity - Opportunities to experience affiliation with individuals and groups are prevalent as is the convenience of sites and opportunities. Experiencing the natural environment, and the use of outdoor skills are largely unimportant.

2. Setting Opportunity - Area is characterized by a highly modified environment, although the background may have natural elements. Vegetation is often exotic and manicured. Soil may be protected by surfacing. Sights and sounds of man, on-site, predominate. Large numbers of users can be expected. Modern facilities are provided for the use and convenience of large numbers of people. Controls and restrictions are obvious and numerous. Facilities for high intensity motor use and parking are present with forms of mass transit often available.

3. Activity Opportunity - All activities listed previously.

APPENDIX D
VRM CLASS OBJECTIVES

CLASS 1 OBJECTIVE

The objective of this class is to preserve the existing character of the landscape. This class provides for natural ecological changes; however, it does not preclude very limited management activity. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention. The landscape should appear to be unaltered by man.

CLASS 2 OBJECTIVE

The objective of this class is to retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer and should blend into the existing landscape. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of form, line, color, and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

CLASS 3 OBJECTIVE

The objective of this class is to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate. Management activities may attract attention but should not dominate the view of the casual observer. This less restrictive class allows for a larger scale development or activity which is an obvious and distinctive feature separate from the existing landscape. Changes should repeat the basic elements found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

CLASS 4 OBJECTIVE

The objective of this class is to provide for management activities which require modification of the existing characteristic landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high, which would greatly alter the existing environment. These management activities may dominate the view and be the major focus of viewer attention. However, every attempt should be made to minimize the impact of these activities through careful location, minimal disturbance, and repeating the basic elements.

APPENDIX E
GLOSSARY

ALLOTMENT: An area of land where one or more livestock operators graze their livestock. Allotments generally consist of BLM lands but many also include state-owned and private lands. An allotment may include one or more separate pastures.

ALLOTMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN (AMP): A livestock grazing management plan for a specific allotment based on multiple-use resource management objectives. The AMP considers livestock grazing in relation to other uses of the range and in relation to renewable resources - watershed, vegetation and wildlife. An AMP establishes the seasons of use, the number of livestock to be permitted on the range and the rangeland developments needed.

AMERICAN INDIAN RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ACT OF 1978: A federal law which resolves that it shall be the policy of the United States to protect and preserve for the American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut, and Native Hawaiian the inherent right of freedom to worship through ceremonial and traditional rites. Federal agencies are directed to evaluate their policies and procedures to determine if changes are needed to ensure that such rights and freedoms are not disrupted by agency practices. The act, a specific expression of First Amendment guarantees of religious freedom.

ANIMAL UNIT MONTH (AUM): The amount of forage necessary for the sustenance of one cow or its equivalent for one month.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES PROTECTION ACT OF 1979: A Federal law which provides felony-level penalties for the unauthorized excavation, removal, damage, alteration, defacement, sale, purchase, exchange, transportation, receipt, or offering of any archaeological resource, more than 100 years of age, found on public land or Indian land. No distinction is made regarding National Register eligibility. Definitions, permit requirements, and criminal and civil penalties are established, among other provisions to correct legal gaps and deficiencies. It is implemented by uniform regulations at 43 CFR Part 7. The act further provides for exemption from the Freedom of Information Act, the disclosure of the nature and location of archaeological resources.

ARCHAEOLOGY: The branch of anthropology engaged in the theory and practice of recovering, analyzing, interpreting, and explaining evidence of the human prehistoric and historic past.

CARRYING CAPACITY: (1) Ecology/wildlife management - The number (or weight) of organisms of a given species and quality that can survive in a given ecosystem (without causing deterioration of that ecosystem) through the least favorable environmental conditions that occur within a stated interval of time. (2) Recreation management - The level and type(s) of recreational use that a natural or developed area can sustain without deterioration of the quality of the recreation experience or the resource.

COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT (CMA): A formal written agreement between the BLM and other party or parties which establishes objectives, responsibilities and performance standards of the cooperating parties in managing and using public lands for projects associated with recreation livestock grazing, wildlife management, and other appropriate needs.

CRITICAL HABITAT: Any or all habitat element(s), the loss of which, would appreciably decrease the likelihood of the survival and recovery of an officially listed species. It may represent any portion of the present habitat of an officially listed species and may include additional areas for population expansion. The official determination of critical habitat is the responsibility of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and takes appropriate Federal Register notification and action.

CRUCIAL HABITAT: Habitat on which a species depends for survival; there are no alternative ranges or habitats available. May also be called "key range or habitat."

CULTURAL PROPERTY: The location of past human activity, occupation, or use, identifiable through field inventory (survey), historical documentation, or oral evidence; includes archaeological, historic, or architectural sites, structures, or places, and may include definite sites or places of traditional cultural or religious importance to specified social and/or cultural groups, whether or not represented by physical remains.

CULTURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY: A term used to refer both to a record of cultural resources known to occur within a defined geographic area, and to the methods used in developing the record. Depending on intended applications for the data, inventories may be based on (a) synthesis of previously indirect sources; (b) systematic examinations of the land surface and naturale exposures of the subsurface for indications of past human activity as represented by artificial modifications of the land and/or the presence of artifacts; and (c) the use of interviews and related means of locating and describing previously unrecorded or incompletely documented cultural resources, including those which may not be identifiable through physical examination.

DAY-USE FACILITY: A recreational development where overnight parking or camping is not allowed.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA): A concise public document for which a Federal agency is responsible. An EA serves (1) to briefly provide enough evidence and analysis for determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) or a finding of no significant impacts; (2) to aid an agency's compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act when no EIS is needed; and (3) to facilitate preparation of an EIS when one is needed.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: An animal or plant species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range (as defined in The Endangered Species Act Amendments of 1982). This is the definition used by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

EPHEMERAL RANGE: Range consisting primarily of annual plants which varies in production annually according to fluctuation of precipitation and temperature.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS): An analytical document that portrays potential impacts on the human environment of a particular course of action and its possible alternatives. An EIS is developed for use by decisionmakers to weigh the environmental consequences of a potential decision.

FEDERAL LAND POLICY AND MANAGEMENT ACT OF 1976 (FLPMA): The Congressional Act that directed BLM to manage the public lands according to the principles of multiple-use and sustained yield. Section 601 of the act established the California Desert Conservation Area and called for development of the Desert Plan. Section 603 called for BLM to review roadless areas for potential inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, and mandated interim management protection of wilderness study areas.

HABITAT: The place where an animal or plant normally lives, often characterized by a dominant plant and codominant form (pinyon juniper habitat).

HABITAT MANAGEMENT PLAN (HMP): A plan developed for a specific wildlife habitat area that requires special management attention.

INTERPRETATION: An educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objectives, by first hand experience and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information.

LEASABLE MINERALS: Minerals whose extraction from Federal land requires a lease and the payment of royalties. Leasable minerals include coal, oil and gas, oil shale and tar sands; geothermal steam; potash; phosphate; sodium; and all other minerals that may be acquired under the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended.

LIMITED SUPPRESSION: A fire-fighting strategy that is less than full suppression, is based on a land-use decision, and is used where controlling a fire is extremely difficult or where resource values do not warrant the expense normally associated with full suppression.

LIVESTOCK LESSEE: One who holds a lease to graze on Federal, State, or certain privately owned lands.

LOCATABLE MINERALS: Gold, silver, lead, and other minerals recognized by the standard authorities and found in enough quantity and of high enough quality to justify their location under the Mining Law of 1972, as amended.

MITIGATION: The lessening of an adverse effect by avoiding or applying appropriate protection measures (e.g., the recovery of cultural data, off-site compensation of diminished habitat, environmental reclamation).

MITIGATION MEASURES: Methods or procedures undertaken for the purpose of avoiding or reducing potential impacts of an action.

MULTIPLE-USE: The management of public lands and their various resource values so that they are used in the combination that will best meet present and future public needs.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES (NRHP): A list of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology and culture maintained by the Secretary of the Interior. Expanded as authorized by Section 2(b) of the Historic Sites Act of 1935 and Section 101 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE (OHV): A general term referring to all types of vehicles capable of operation off maintained roads, including motorcycles, ATVs, dune buggies, and four-wheel vehicles.

OFF-ROAD VEHICLE DESIGNATIONS:

Open - Designated area and trails where OHVs may be operated (subject to operating regulations and vehicle standards set forth in BLM Manuals 8341 and 8343).

Limited - Designated areas and trails where the use of OHVs is subject to restrictions, such as limiting the number of types of vehicles allowed, dates and times of use (seasonal restrictions): limiting use to existing roads and trails or limiting use to designated roads and trails. Combinations of restrictions are possible, such as limiting use to certain types of vehicles during certain times of the year.

Closed - Designated areas and trails where the use of OHVs is permanently or temporarily prohibited. Emergency use of vehicles is allowed.

PUBLIC LAND: Any land and interest in land owned by the United States within the several States and administered by the Secretary of the Interior through the Bureau of Land Management, without regard to how the United States acquired ownership, except (1) lands located on the Outer Continental Shelf; and (2) lands held for the benefit of Indians, Aleuts, and Eskimos.

PUBLIC LAND ORDER (PLO): An order effecting, modifying, or revoking a withdrawal or reservation which has been issued by the Secretary pursuant to his delegations of authority.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Part of BLM's planning system that provides the opportunity for citizens as individuals or groups to express local, regional, and national perspectives and concerns in the rulemaking, decisionmaking, inventory, and planning processes for public lands. This includes public meetings, hearings or advisory boards or panels that may review resource management proposals and offer suggestions or criticisms for the various alternatives considered.

RANGE CONDITION: The present state of vegetation of a range site in relation to the climax plant community of that site. Range condition is basically an ecological rating of the plant community.

RANGELAND MONITORING PROGRAM: A program designed to measure changes in plant composition, ground cover, animal populations, and climatic conditions on the public rangeland. Vegetation studies are used to monitor changes in rangeland condition and determine the reason for any changes that are occurring. The vegetation studies consist of actual use, utilization trend, and climatic conditions.

RECREATION AND PUBLIC PURPOSES ACT (R&PP): This act authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to lease or convey public lands for recreational and public purposes under specified conditions to states or their political subdivisions and to nonprofit corporations and associations.

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY: Those outdoor recreational activities which offer satisfaction in a particular physical, social, and management setting in the EIS area. These activities are primarily hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, photography, boating, and camping.

RESEARCH NATURAL AREA (RNA): A natural area established and maintained for research and education, which may include a) typical or unusual plant or animal types, associations, or other biotic phenomena or b) characteristic or outstanding geologic, soil, or aquatic features or processes. The public may be excluded or restricted from such areas to protect studies.

RESOURCE AREA: The smallest administrative subdivision of a BLM district.

RESOURCE-BASED RECREATION: Recreation relating to the natural features of the land.

RIGHT-OF-WAY: Public lands authorized to be used or occupied pursuant to a right-of-way grant.

RIGHT-OF-WAY GRANT: Authorizing the use of a right-of-way over, upon, under, or through public lands for construction, operation, maintenance, and termination of a project.

RIPARIAN AREA: A specialized form of wetland with characteristic vegetation restricted to areas along or adjacent to rivers and streams, also periodically, flooded lake and reservoir shore areas, as well as lakes with stable water levels.

ROAD: A vehicle route which has been improved and maintained by mechanical means to insure relatively regular and continued use.

SALABLE MINERALS: Minerals such as common varieties of sand, stone, gravel, pumicite, and clay that may be acquired under the Materials Act of 1947, as amended.

SCENIC QUALITY: The degree of harmony, contrast, and variety within a landscape (used in visual resources management).

SEASONAL: An employee who works for only part of the year, but who works full time (40 hours per week) during the period of employment.

40

SIKES ACT -(Public Law 93-452): An Act passed to expand the authority for carrying out conservation and rehabilitation programs on public lands. Provides for the development of comprehensive plans for conservation and rehabilitation programs by the Secretary of the Interior in consultation with the state agencies. It also provides for entering into cooperative agreements between the Secretary of the Interior and state agencies for the management of wildlife habitat on public lands.

THREATENED SPECIES: An animal or plant species which is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range (as defined in the Endangered Species Act Amendments of 1982). This is the definition used by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The State of California and the California Native Plant Society define the term slightly differently.

VEGETATIVE TYPE: A plant community dominated or apparently dominated by one or more species which give it a characteristic appearance or aspect. Examples include sagebrush, creosotebush, mesquite, shortgrass, tallgrass, etc. Usually a subdivision of a grazing region.

VISUAL RESOURCE: The visible physical features on a landscape (e.g., land, water, vegetation, structures, and other features).

VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (VRM): The systematic means to identify visual values, establish objectives which provide the standards for managing those values, and evaluate the visual impacts of proposed projects to ensure that the objectives are met. All lands in EMNSA have been inventoried and designated with VRM class objectives which set levels of acceptable visual change.

WATER QUALITY: The chemical, physical, and biological characteristics of water with respect to its suitability for a particular use.

WATERSHED: A total area of land above a given point on a waterway that contributes runoff water to the flow at that point.

WITHDRAWAL: An action that restricts the use of public lands and segregates the lands from the operation of all or some of the public land or mineral laws.

APPENDIX F
ACRONYMS

ACHP: Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

AMP: Allotment Management Plan

AU: Animal Unit

AUM: Animal Unit Month

BLM: Bureau of Land Management

CFR: Code of Federal Regulations

CRMP: Cultural Resource Management Plan

EIS: Environmental Impact Statement

FLPMA: Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976

FMRA: Fort Meade Recreation Area

FWS: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

HMP: Habitat Management Plan

MOU: Memorandum of Understanding

NEPA: National Environmental Policy Act

NRHP: National Register of Historic Places

ORV: Off-Road Vehicle

PLO: Public Land Order

RAMP: Recreation Area Management Plan

RMP: Resource Management Plan

SHPO: State Historic Preservation Office

USDI: U.S. Department of the Interior

VA: Veterans Administration

VRM: Visual Resource Management

42

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